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B-BOY SLASH NOVELS

Junai

(Pure Love)

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- THIS IS A NON-PROFIT TRANSLATION -

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もうできない、首を横に振ったが、鈴木は聞き入れてくれなかった。
「もう離さない……そう言ったよね？」
チュ、と口唇に触れるくらいのキスをし微笑んでそう言うと、胸に顔を埋めてくる。
(本文より)

I couldn't do this anymore, I shook my head, but Suzuki didn't listen.
"Didn't I say I won't let you go again?" He said with a smile after pressing his lips to mine with a kiss and then brought his face to my chest.

「Pure Love: Chapter 1」

Long after that, I believed that it had been a fated encounter. If I didn't believe that the events of those several days – the days when I was isolated from the 'reality' I had previously lived – were 'tossed by fate', then my body and mind would be crushed from shock. Now that I had finally crawled out from that darkness, I was trying to return back to living in the real world by convincing myself that what had happened had been due to fate. From then on, in order for me to continue living as myself, I tried to forget those days and reach Enlightenment¹.

The days that could only be called – the descent into a fated distortion.

* * * *

The deadline, which happened once every several months, was approaching, and I, a systems engineer (S.E), had been busy completing everything on time. Ahh, I don't feel good, I thought to myself, but that's natural considering I had only gotten three hours of sleep per day for several days up until now.

When I realized that I was going to be late for work, I dashed up the stairs to try to get on the train, which had arrived at the platform, but it appeared that this was a bad idea. Suddenly, I was blacking out, so I grasped the stair railing to support myself. The crowd of people around me kept rushing by me as if I was just getting in their way. I heard the sound of the train leaving the platform overhead and accepted the fact that I will be late. I will just have to catch the next train, which was going to arrive soon, but I couldn't even keep my head up. I felt that I was having a minor anemic attack. Cold sweat dripped down from my forehead and everything went black before me. I have to at least reach the top of the stairs, I thought, but I couldn't get my legs to go forward at all, so I just crouched down on the spot for a while, still holding on to the stair railing.

At that moment, I heard, "Are you alright?"

Someone was supporting my back while whispering to me in a low voice. There are kind people in this society! 'I'm alright', I tried to answer the kind person, but in reality, I wasn't 'alright' at all. I couldn't even speak.

"...You don't look alright."

It seemed like the kind person could tell my condition just by looking at me. He

¹ *Higan (Enlightenment): Buddhist concept meaning to cross over from ignorance and suffering to Enlightenment and peace.*

began muttering to himself.

“Can you walk? We’ll get trampled over if we stay here. Let’s go up to the top of the platform,” he said and grabbed me by my arms, trying to force me to stand up.

“I’m sorry...,” I finally managed to breathe out as I lifted my head and looked at the kind man’s face.

“Take it easy.” He was peering at me and had a smile on his face when our eyes met. What a good-looking face, I thought. Even in my current condition, I couldn’t help but be instantly mesmerized by his face. At the same time, I felt that I was losing consciousness and accidentally collapsed into the man’s chest.

“Are you alright?!” The man’s frantic voice sounded distant to me. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the bag that I had been holding tumble down the stairs. Ahh, I need to pick it up, I thought, but I couldn’t get my body to move. And with that, I lost complete consciousness.

* * * *

I woke up to the sound of the commotion around me. My forehead felt incredibly cool. Ahh, that feels good, I thought as I parted my eyes open.

“Didn’t anyone notice you?”

As my field of sight returned, a young, attractive man was peering straight at me. He had a small beauty mark next to his mouth, and he smiled at me with relief. The moment I noticed the beauty mark, it somehow reminded me of something.

“Are you alright?”

I didn’t know for how long I had been staring at him absentmindedly, mesmerized by his face when the man, sounding worried, asked me that.

“Ah.....yes...,” I answered, coming back to my senses, but then immediately I was captivated again by the young man’s beautiful face as he peered at me.

How could I think that a man’s face is ‘beautiful’? But the man before me was indeed really beautiful. His skin was white, which made me think he must be half-Japanese, and there was a shine in his large black eyes. He had long eyelashes that cast a shadow beneath his eyes and slightly pink cheeks that complimented his moist, red lips in an extremely charming way.

Of course I had never thought a man to be ‘charming’ or anything like that until now. He peered at me and pushed my bangs out of my face with his long, slender fingers. It felt nice and cool because his hands were cold as he rested the palm of his hand on my forehead. It startled me to think anything like that about a man, and I was so at a loss of

words that I surprised even myself. At that moment, the bell rang signaling the departure of the train, and I finally came to my senses.

“I’m sorry……!” I quickly tried to sit up, because I had been laying on the bench that stood on the platform. I had lost consciousness by the stairs, so the man must have carried me all the way here. As I tried to sit up, I looked at his rather slender physique, feeling bad that he had to do that for me.

“You shouldn’t get up too quickly.” The man placed his hand on my chest and gently stopped me from sitting up. “How do you feel? You’re still pale…are you alright?”

As his hand supported my back, his beautiful face came closer to mine, and for some reason, I grew flustered.

“I’m alright,” I answered and forced myself to look away from him. Out of the corner of my eye, the beauty mark by his mouth caught my attention. All of a sudden, a familiar face came to my mind, and inadvertently I quietly exclaimed, “Ah!”

I gazed intensely at the man’s face in a new light.

“……What’s the matter?” The man asked, slightly frowning and probably wondering what was wrong as I stared at him.

“…Suzuki-kun?”

The small beauty mark by the mouth, symmetric facial features, and large dark eyes were all something I had seen before when I was a child and now, it clearly came to me.

“…How do you know that name?” He was so surprised at my quiet outburst that his face changed color.

“…You’re Suzuki-kun from elementary school at Kunitachi, right? We were in the same class. It’s me, Shimizu.”

I felt his grip on my shoulder relax, so I sat up by myself and peered intensely at his face as I told him my name.

“…Shimizu-kun……” The man – Suzuki – said my name hoarsely.

What a coincidence this was! How many years has it been since we’ve seen each other? I thought, calculating the years in my head. We hadn’t seen each other since he had transferred schools during the summer we were six grade elementary students, so it had been almost twelve years. I took a moment to reminisce those times. His face from back then and his face now were indeed the same face. Ahh, yes, this really is Suzuki-kun, I thought, smiling, and Suzuki returned my smile, but for some reason a complicated look appeared on his face.

I was just about to ask him ‘what’s wrong?’, but that look disappeared from his face, and Suzuki, looking worried, asked me a question instead.

“You’re still pale. It will probably be hard on you to ride the train...you’re on your way to work, right? Where is the nearest train station by your work?”

“Ōtemachi...why?”

I slowly rose up from the bench as I answered his question, still not quite understanding why he wanted to know the nearest train station. I felt a little sick, but I could stand, so I thought that I could ride the train. Being reunited with Suzuki brought back such nice memories, but I had a pile of work to do today and if I didn’t hurry up and get to the company soon I would be very embarrassed to face my colleagues. I was just about to say my thanks to Suzuki for taking care of me, when Suzuki put his arm around me again and made a surprising offer.

“I’m also headed to Ōtemachi. If you’d like, I could go there with you by taxi? The roads aren’t as busy as the subway right now, so it would be a lot faster than the train.”

“No, it’s okay. I can ride the train,” I quickly shook my head and flatly rejected his offer.

“I’ll be late like this, so I was planning to go by taxi. It’s nothing to worry about.” Suzuki said with a smile. I would feel guilty if I made him late, so I couldn’t say ‘no’ this time.

“...I’ll pay for the taxi.”

I really didn’t understand why he was being so considerate over me, but in the end I couldn’t reject kindness. At the very least, I will pay for the taxi, I thought, and decided to accept his kind offer. Ōtemachi was around thirty minutes from here by car. I would have to pay for something I hadn’t planned, but on the bright side, this would be a good opportunity to talk to my old classmate from elementary school that I hadn’t seen for twelve years. Actually, when I saw his face, I was strangely drawn to him. This was probably because I had already seen him before when we were young.

Yet with all of this, for some reason I had a slight feeling that something was wrong swirling deep inside my heart. I couldn’t point out why this was, but surely this feeling would disappear once we started talking, I thought as I looked at Suzuki.

“Let’s split the cost,” Suzuki said with a smile, looking at me and tightening his grip on my shoulder. As we began walking side by side, I saw that he was rather taller than me. Besides that, his suit was concealing his built, but upon closer inspection I saw that he was actually more athletic than he looked. He’s like a foreign model, I absent-mindedly thought about these needless things as I looked up at the side of Suzuki’s beautiful face. Suzuki, however, for some reason did not say a word.



It seemed like a dream to walk side by side with my classmate whom I haven't seen for twelve years. This coincidence is kind of a rare thing, isn't it? I thought as Suzuki helped me descend the stairs. We headed towards the place where the taxicabs were parked in front of the station. Suzuki let me get in the taxi first and then he also climbed in, sat down beside me, and told the driver our destination – Ōtemachi.

"But still, it's been a long time," I said, because twelve years is considered a 'long time' and fixed my gaze at Suzuki's face again.

"It sure has....," Suzuki nodded deeply and said, "Do you still feel sick? You should lie down for a while."

He stretched out his hand towards my forehead.

"I'm alright."

I was also going to add that I was conscious now, but the moment the palm of his cold hand touched my forehead, my vision suddenly started spinning. Inadvertently, I grabbed onto the seat for support and automatically looked up at him.

"What's wrong?" He gazed at me, a strange light flickering in his large, dark eyes.

"...Somehow...I....," I was going to add 'not feel good' but couldn't. Suzuki touched my forehead again with his cold fingertips. At that moment, everything before me went black and without knowing why, I collapsed in the taxi car seat, fainting for the second time.

* * * *

When I opened my eyes again, I was in a room I had never seen before. The structure of the room was that of a log house. Where in the world am I? I absentmindedly wondered, looking up the beams on the tall ceiling.

".....Ngh," I sat up quickly, realizing that I was in a rather peculiar situation and place right now. The room was filled with a slightly sweet scent. Perhaps that was why my head felt very heavy. I got up off the bed and looked around the room, which contained only this one bed.

When I happened to glance at my wristwatch, I saw that someone had taken it off, and only now did I also notice that someone had taken off my suit jacket as well.

Where in a world was I?

And what time was it right now?

There was a single window with its curtains tightly shut. I came over to the window and fiercely parted open the curtains.

“Wha-?”

I was so in shock that I loudly cried out and stood frozen in place. On the outside of the glass window were narrowly spaced-out metal bars.

Why are there metal bars?

But before that, what is this place?

What in the world is going on?

I thought, standing there dazed for some time. But then I finally came to my senses, opened the window and tried to shake the metal bars. However, the bars didn't budge. I could see that on the other side of the metal bars were dead winter trees and a lake. The lake that stretched out below appeared a dark black color instead of blue. Perhaps this was because of the poor weather conditions. Judging by this cold, the temperature was quite low for Tokyo. I closed the window and looked out at the scenery on the other side.

Was I dreaming?

I seemed to be awake, but for some reason my thoughts were scattered. This was probably because the heater was on causing the room to be very hot and also probably because of the sweet, strange scent that had been lingering inside this room.

I placed my forehead against the cold window glass.

First, I have to calm down, I thought, letting out a quiet sigh and closing my eyes. This morning, I had an anemic attack at the train station and my former elementary school classmate, Suzuki, had helped me. He was so kind that he had even offered to go with me and take me to work on a taxi and then...

What in the world had happened to me after that?

I came to my senses upon hearing the sound of an opening click of the door. If the window was a no-go, then perhaps the door? I thought, realizing this only now and looked in the direction of the sound. Next to the sturdy, wooden door, which was behind me, stood a tall man – Suzuki. This dark eyed, beautiful man was no longer wearing a suit but was instead clad all in black – a black turtleneck and black pants. Perhaps because of this, he seemed to blend in with the dimly lit room as he stood at the doorway breathing quietly. He seemed like a strange illusion.

“Did you notice me?”

I felt something was wrong by the way he talked so familiarly to me. He was approaching me, smiling as if saying of course it was he. At that moment, a feeling resembling fear grew inside me towards him.

“What.....is this place?”

I pressed myself to the wall, trying to get away from him, but this only increased

my fear.

“This is my villa.....How do you feel?”

Like always, a beautiful smile played on his lips as he walked right up to me. On reflex, I tried to get away from him, but he grabbed my arm. He grabbed my wrist so tightly that it hurt. I winced.

“You should stay here for a while.....are you hungry?” he said, then pulled me by the arm and lead me towards the bed. I tried to stay put, not letting him have his way, but was unsuccessful and had no choice but to forcibly get dragged back to the bed I had been sleeping on up until now.

“You’re Suzuki-kun...aren’t you?”

I looked up at him as he grabbed me by my shoulders and forced me to sit down on the bed.

“...How did you remember?” Suzuki looked down at me with what could be described as a sad expression on his face.

“.....Eh?”

Looking up at him and staring into such eyes, I came to recall a distant memory...

“What are you talking about? Who is this Suzuki person? There’s no one here named like that.”

“No, that’s not true. Why doesn’t anyone remember him?”

“You’re a strange one. There was no transfer student by that name, okay?”

At that time, I hadn’t understood the reason for this. Yes, just who was he...?

“My real name, huh?” Suddenly, I heard Suzuki’s voice and quickly came to my senses. I looked up at him as he slowly drew his face closer to mine.

“What is.....your real name?” My voice came out hoarse when I asked. I hadn’t even noticed how close Suzuki’s face had come to mine; it was so close that I could feel his breath, but for some reason I couldn’t move. He was so close to me that he was out of focus, and he looked at me with a piercing look, his dark eyes twinkling. I couldn’t move, and in fact, I couldn’t even look away.

“Let’s see...well, my real name is...” He grabbed my chin with his cold hand. Then he grabbed my chin again with his other hand. He’s going to choke me, was the thought that instantly came to my head, and I felt fear. Nevertheless, I couldn’t move; not even an inch. “...Is not Suzuki,” he whispered, gazing at me and slowly pressed his lips to mine.

It wasn’t his cold hands that caused a chill to run down my spine, but the warm

sensation on my lips. The chill awoke my body from the paralysis. I tried to push him away, but he quickly caught me by the arms. He raised my arms up high over my head and lips still pressed to mine, slowly pushed me down on the bed on which I sat. I had absolutely no idea what was happening to me. When he pressed me down so powerfully, the warm sensation of his lips on top of mine disgusted me, and I desperately fought back by thrashing my arms and legs, trying to get away from him.

But I was as weak as I feared, and Suzuki continued pressing his lips to mine with ease. It was hard to breathe, so I opened my mouth a little, and his tongue slipped inside, finding mine. As I desperately tried to avoid it, I still forced myself to believe that this was a bad dream.

This is a dream. When I wake up, surely I will be lying on the bench at the train station, and the station attendant will be peering at me, asking me if he should call an ambulance, and the people around me – pushing each other around in order to be the first on the train – will be throwing me quick glances for I had collapsed at the platform and was getting trampled on by this crowd of people, and.....

“.....!”

Suddenly, his lips left mine, and I came back to my senses. I hadn’t even noticed when Suzuki, or rather, he who once called himself ‘Suzuki’, sat straddled on top of me as I lay on my back. At the same time his lips had left mine, he also had let go of my hands, but before I could even try to sit up, he grabbed my shirt and ripped it apart without even bothering to unbutton it.

“Wha-!”

I flinched, since I hadn’t expected him to do that, and stopped moving completely. In that interval, he quickly undid my belt, and I finally remembered to resist. But again, he found my arms and with one hand, skillfully lowered my pants and underwear.

“Stop!”

All still unbeknownst to me, I desperately tried to free my arms and legs as he removed all of my clothing. Being naked like this had only one name for it – unbelievable. Even though, I fully realized the fact that I was in a serious situation here; I was first and foremost, confused. I was panting from resisting so much and inadvertently, looked up at him as he pressed my naked body into the sheets.

“.....Don’t struggle.....”

His breathing was also heavy, but when he noticed me looking at him, he smiled beautifully at me.

“.....What...are you trying to do.....?”

His gentle tone of voice and his beautiful smile removed some of my growing

fear.

“...What am I trying to do...?” He chuckled, narrowing his beautiful eyes, and brought his face close to mine again. I averted my face to the side, trying to dodge his lips.

“We’re finally reunited...let’s have some fun.”

With my face turned to the side, he whispered into my ear and put his tongue inside. A wet sound echoed in my head when he licked inside my ear. A shiver immediately ran down my spine from this sensation and I desperately started to resist again, trying to push him away because the feeling was disgusting.

“.....It can’t be helped,” he gave out an exasperated sigh and pressed his entire body on top of mine as I struggled. I thrashed my arms and legs; my desire to get away from him becoming more and more desperate, for his calm demeanor terrified me more than anything.

“I told you not to struggle, didn’t I?” Suzuki whispered in a completely sweet way and suddenly flipped me over so as to have me face down on the bed. He grabbed my hips in his hands and raised them up high. My cheeks felt hot as they rubbed against the sheets. I tried to struggle again, but he parted my legs with his knees, spreading them far apart.

“.....Eh.....?”

Before I could even look back to see what he was trying to do, Suzuki grabbed my buttocks and suddenly pressed something hot against my anus.

“...!”

He forcibly screwed a hot mass right inside, and a pain – that felt like my whole body was being split in two – ran through me. I couldn’t help but cry out as I tried to crawl away from him. Consumed entirely by pain, I was unable to understand what was happening to me. When I had realized that it was his cock that he had screwed into my anus, he had already grabbed my buttocks and pushed himself in further inside me. The pain increased. Loudly crying out again, I tried to lounge forward, grabbing at the sheets and trying to desperately get away from his grasp, but Suzuki wouldn’t let me and continued to firmly hold me down. Then he began to violently move his hips. It was so painful that I shut my eyes and saw lights.

People say that when you receive a great shock, your thoughts start to drift, but instead, perhaps you start to see flashes of fireworks from so much pain. I thought about these trifling things as my thoughts began to drift.

He continued fucking me until I finally was unable to stand the endless pain tormenting me and lost consciousness.



A shiver ran up from the lower half of my body and this chilling feeling caused me to slowly regain consciousness. Right before my eyes I saw black hair wiggling at the center where my legs met. Perhaps realizing that I had awoken, the black hair rose up, revealing a face – a beautiful white face and misty black eyes. And inside that finely-shaped mouth was.....

His black eyes were narrowed in a smile, and as we looked at each other, inside his mouth he was holding...

He was holding my cock. He slowly sucked it up and down and licked the tip with his tongue.

“.....!”

It began to take form in his hands. A blood vessel began to surface on my growing dick. I couldn't stand the sight of it.

“*Stop!*” I yelled and tried to sit up, but at that moment I noticed that both of my arms were bound. While I had been unconscious, he had tied both of my arms up to the bed frame. I shook my arms, trying to untie them, but the knot was too tight, and there was no sign of it coming loose.

“...Are you struggling again?” With his face buried between my legs, he whispered in a singsong voice, continuing to lick my cock. He licked the underside with his red tongue causing it to twitch and leak out clear fluid from the tip.

“Stop.....”

Looking at my own erection brought me shame and disgust. I squirmed again, trying to get away from his grasp.

“It will feel better.....” Suzuki said with a sigh and tightly seized my legs, preventing me from moving. Then he spread my legs again and pushed my knees up to my chest. Being exposed like this reminded me of the pain I had previously felt, and I immediately flinched.

“.....If you put up a fight.....it will hurt again,” he said, dragging his tongue from my cock down towards my anus. As he grabbed my thighs and held my hips up in the air, he thoroughly began licking the place he had previously hammered his cock in.

“...No.....!!!”

Again, a chilling feeling ran from my legs and spread up my back. The wound he had previously made began to sting from his saliva and this intensified the shivers. Holding my buttocks wide open with his hands, he twisted his hot tongue inside the

opening. As he licked my soft insides with his tongue, the shivers began tormenting me again.

It was strange. It began to be difficult to call this feeling a 'chill', but I desperately turned a blind eye towards what the feeling actually was.

"I'll do it slowly this time...okay?" Suzuki said, raising his face from my lower regions, revealing a smile. I only now noticed that he was already naked as well. For a moment, I was mesmerized by how beautifully proportioned his body was, even though I was in such a situation. When he stood up, I saw a mass of black hair above his hard cock, which protruded from his abdomen. This reminded me of the pain I had felt before, and I started to withdraw my buttocks away from him.

"Don't do that..." Suzuki smiled, stretched out his arms towards me and grabbed me by the legs, raising them up and began screwing the tip of his erect cock inside me once more.

"Noo.....!"

This time again, the pain was so great that it felt like my body was being ripped in two, and unable to stand it, I loudly cried out.

"Sorry..." he apologized, chuckling. He slowly went in deeper. I writhed from the pain and buried my face into the sheets, trying to put up with it. Suzuki readjusted his grip on my waist and with a quick thrust, inserted the whole thing inside me. He gave out a small sigh.

"You're tight..." he said, moving my legs closer to his body, and I moaned from the intense pain which assaulted me.

"...You've gone limp.....leaves me no choice then, I guess."

One of his hands left my leg and reached towards my cock. I had no more power left in me to dodge his hand. With his cock still inside me, he began moving his hand up and down my cock.

".....!"

He moved his hand so skillfully that my cock, flaccid from the pain as it was, began to take form again. I bit my lip and put up with the humiliation of getting hard from his touch. The heat and feel of his cock buried deep inside me, the sensation of his slender fingers toying my genitals, all accumulated and stimulated me.

"Can I move?" he asked, already starting to pierce into me, and I suddenly began to feel something other than pain. This other feeling was probably because he was rubbing my genitals up and down at the same time as he moved in and out of me, and probably from the continuous obscene, wet sounds, which came from the place our bodies met. It started to consume my mind.

“.....Mmph!”

I'm going to come, I thought, and at that moment, let out a small moan. As if enticed by my moan, he came inside me about the same time I spilled out milky-white fluid into his hand. Shoulders heaving, he slowly lowered himself on top of me. The weight of his body made me feel like throwing up, and at that moment, I lost consciousness as if trying to escape this.

「Pure Love: Chapter 2」

I was dreaming.

I was back in sixth grade at elementary school. I had been absent from school for about a week because I had been sick with rubella, and when I had returned, I noticed that the classroom was short of one student desk. I had turned to my friends, “Where’s Suzuki?” I had asked around.

“Suzuki?”

Everyone shook their head no and told me there was no such person.

“What are you guys saying? Suzuki – the guy who transferred here the second semester!”

Thinking that everyone was ganging up on me and playing a joke on me since I had been absent, I had gotten very angry and had lashed out at everyone.

“We don’t have a transfer student in our class.”

Not only did the friends I usually hung out with had told me this, but even the class president, Miyata, had answered this, sounding confused. I had thrown a fit right there and had told them to stop messing around. I just couldn’t believe them no matter what.

Someone had called the teacher, and I quieted down.

“Sensei, everyone says they don’t know who Suzuki-kun is!” I had explained the reason for my outburst to the teacher, but even the teacher had looked puzzled and gave me a shocking reply:

“I don’t know any Suzuki-kun, either.”

The teacher had pressed her hand to my forehead as if checking to see if I still had a fever. My classmates also had peered at me, looking worried. Then I started worrying that perhaps I was dreaming or maybe having a nightmare. This thought had overwhelmed me, and I clung to my teacher and started to cry.

Suzuki-kun – Suzuki Hajime-kun – was a quiet student who had transferred to our class at the end of October during the second semester. When he had stood in the classroom in front of the blackboard and said his name, I had admired his perfect-featured face. It was strange of me, a child myself, to have such a strong admiration for another child, but I admired him precisely because such a beautiful child as him existed in this world. All the girls had wanted to interact with Suzuki-kun. The boys poked fun at him by calling him a ‘pretty boy’, because he didn’t play soccer during recess. But perhaps because he was so good-looking, they had never bullied him. But at the same

time, being blessed with such good looks had kept people away from wanting to be friends with him.

Although he was popular, Suzuki-kun had always been alone. Occasionally, I had spotted him going back home alone when I was also on my way home, but I could never gain the courage to call out to him a ‘let’s go home together’ and had just looked at him from behind with an unnecessary guilty feeling in my heart. I had prayed for one day to talk to him and become his friend, but I could never be the first one to start the conversation with him no matter what. I had secretly looked at him from a distance, because I knew that I too was only one among all of his classmates. Suzuki-kun had disappeared while I had been absent from school. I absolutely couldn’t believe that, so when I had gotten home, I asked my mother where Suzuki-kun had transferred. But when even my mother had told me that she didn’t know any transfer student named ‘Suzuki-kun’, I had stopped mentioning his name again. This was a strange thing to have happened, but I felt like I shouldn’t question Suzuki-kun’s whereabouts anymore. Shortly after that, I went into middle school and before I knew it, I forgot about Suzuki-kun.

Why had Suzuki-kun vanished from everyone’s memory? I had sometimes wondered about this strange thing, but recently, no, for these past several years, that thought had never even crossed my mind. However, this morning on the train platform I always used to commute to work, I was strangely reunited with him – he who had now become a strong, but still beautiful, grown man...

* * * *

I slowly regained consciousness. I looked around me, dazed. It was already dark inside the room, but my hands were still tied to the bed railings and Suzuki was nowhere in sight. I felt a chill and shivered a little. At that moment, his remains seeped out from beneath me, and it brought back memories of what had happened to me not too long ago.

Was this...a dream?

Suddenly there was a whirring sound and warm air started coming down from the vents in the ceiling. Since I was cold, I was relieved for this, but along with the warmth, the smell of our sex and another strange, terribly sweet scent rose up into the air making me knit my eyebrows.

“My real name is...”

What in the world had he meant by real name? When I moved around, the sound of the cord binding my arms suddenly brought me back to my senses. I had loosened up the cord, because I had moved, so I continued to loosen it slowly by moving my arms

several times. I patiently continued with that, until finally, I freed both of my arms. As I rubbed my numb wrists, I slowly tried to sit up. When I tried to get off the bed, a dull pain ran through my body making me crouch down on the spot for a while and endure the pain.

Then I crawled towards the heavy, wooden door. After I finally stood up and grabbed the doorknob, I turned the doorknob with all my might, but the door wouldn't budge. Once again, I crouched down with my back to the door. Could this actually be happening? If so, why was something like this happening to me? And if this was a dream then...

Why was I not waking up?

"How did you remember?"

His beautiful, black eyes had held sadness...

Beautiful – was the adjective that fit his eyes the most, I thought as I recalled Suzuki's misty, black, twinkling eyes. It hurt to even sit, so I wrapped my arms around my knees and rolled down to the floor. I felt like my whole body was screaming in pain.

"Ugh..."

Before I knew it, I was back in my sixth grade elementary classroom, clinging to my teacher and crying. Arms wrapped around my knees, I couldn't even wipe away my tears as I lay there bawling like a child.

* * * *

The next morning – it was probably morning, since it was bright outside – I finally woke up when I heard the opening click of the door behind me. Perhaps since I had slept on the floor, my head felt terribly heavy.

I turned my heavy head to look behind me.

"You slept here?" a surprised Suzuki said as he stood outside the door while holding a tray of food. Before I could reply to that, he entered the room, went towards the bed, placed the tray there, and immediately came back to me. "You're probably hungry."

He picked me up in his arms. He had on the same black turtleneck sweater he had been wearing yesterday. That sweater rubbed my cheek. The roughness of the material felt real, and I knew right then that this was not a dream. Realizing this revived some of the terror in my heart. Sleeping must have helped me think more clearly again. It seemed that he had not noticed my change.

"There's nothing around here during this season, is there?" he said listlessly as he lowered me down on the bed. Then he placed the tray he had carried inside the room

down on my knees and said, “Here.”

Casually arranged on the tray was a very simple breakfast consisting of bread, black tea, and cheese.

“Eat,” he said smiling sweetly and then was about to leave the room.

“Suzuki-kun!” I knocked the tray down on the sheets, got off the bed, and yelled out his name while taking several steps towards him. Suzuki stopped walking and slowly turned around to face me in my direction. I saw everything happen in slow motion.

“.....What is it?”

There was no expression on his face when he turned around. Seized with immeasurable fear, I unintentionally took several steps back, until I hit the back of my legs on the bed.

“.....What is it?” He slowly approached me. Trembling, I just stood there, looking at him, unable to say anything. Suzuki was immediately right in front of me and put his arms around me. He hugged me close to him as he continued to lock his gaze with mine. His belt, hidden beneath his sweater, dug into my bare skin. Inadvertently, I grimaced from the dull pain.

“.....What is it?” he asked again as his hands slowly slid down my back and towards my buttocks. When he squeezed in-between my rear, I inadvertently gulped.

“I can’t know if you stay quiet,” he said as he continued grasping my buttocks.

“...*Why!*?” I yelled out in a shrill, fearful voice with my hands pressed to his chest, trying to keep him away from me.

“Why?” Suzuki hugged me with one hand and whispered into my ear in a calm, gentle voice. His quiet, gentle voice was ironically terrifying. Fear engulfed my body, and I couldn’t help but shrink in his arms. At that moment, Suzuki was probably looking at the bed over my shoulder, but perhaps because the tray was there, he pushed me down on the floor instead. He forced me to lie down on my back and forced open my legs. If he was going to do *that* again, I didn’t think I’d be able to resist like I had done yesterday.

Even if I resisted, I would be absolutely no match for him. It was terrifying to have to taste that pain again, but even scarier was his expressionless face right now. How did he see me in his black eyes? – I wondered as I nervously looked up at him. Perhaps sensing my gaze, he also looked down at me.

“Should I tell you...the reason?” he whispered in a very gentle tone of voice as he slowly came down on me.

“.....”

I nodded twice like a lifeless puppet when he asked me that. Perhaps he found this funny, because he chuckled, narrowing his eyes. I was relieved more than anything that finally some kind of expression had appeared on his face and waited for him to speak again.

“...The reason is...simple,” he whispered, bringing his face close to mine. At the same time, his hand went in-between my widely spread legs and he inserted his long, slender finger into my anus. I grimaced at the foreign object, but as he slowly began to twist around his finger, I gradually became used to the feeling.

“.....!!”

Strangely, as he moved his finger, my cock began to take form. I didn't have it in me to even feel ashamed anymore. All I could do was stare at my cock as it grew erect. He silently toyed inside me for some time, but perhaps he found it funny that my cock was erect, because he chuckled again, resuming his conversation.

“You remembered me.....I thought I had erased our existence from that city, but you even remembered my name when we reunited at the train station. Already 12 years have passed, but my – no, our – existence still remains with you. When I think about what kind of consequences this would bring, I have no choice but to imprison you here.....Oh, are you turned on? You look like you're feeling really good...”

His tone of voice suddenly changed. Just as he had said, my cock had become completely hard, but that wasn't all, I hadn't even realized that he had added another finger to twist around inside me, and because of this, some kind of new tingling sensation had sprouted in me, but I desperately pretended not to notice it.

“...Fufu, I told you, didn't I? That it would feel good soon...see? It's already become so hot,” Suzuki said, raising his body off of mine and spreading my legs wider apart. Then he inserted yet another finger and began violently twisting it around inside me.

“.....!”

Immediately, a feeling of ecstasy welled up inside of me. I arched my back backwards and tried to suppress this ‘feeling’.

“So for now, I'm going to see how it goes. In order to find out why you remembered, okay?It's okay. I'm not thinking of taking your life.”

At first, I didn't realize that he was talking about the ‘reason’ again. His fingers attacked me persistently in my behind, and his affectionate one-hand touches on my already dripping cock were too much for me. I let my voice out as I shook on the floor and wished to somehow escape his black eyes.

“I thought the brainwashing had been perfect, but.....there was a flaw

somewhere, wasn't there?"

He put his arms around my stomach and suddenly flipped me over. Then raised my hips up high. He had removed his fingers from inside me, and the now empty place continued to slightly tingle as if begging for something to fill it up.

"Bear with it...for a while. Until I find out the cause for it, okay?" he leaned on me from behind and whispered into my ear. "But, there's no need to bear with *this*, okay?" he whispered in the same tone of voice, and then immediately after that his hot cock went into me. My soft insides squirmed as if enjoying the feel of it, and it seemed that this made him happy.

It did not feel like my behind belonged to my body. I knew it. This is a dream, I thought, tightly shutting my eyes, unable to stand the feeling. His thrusts were becoming too much for me, and I writhed and sighed from the continuous pleasure.

* * * *

After that, I spent my days naked in that room, unbeknownst as to how many mornings and nights went by. The days became monotonous and gradually my emotions became dull. I felt like I was living inside someone else's body. Each time he brought me food he had his way with me.

"You're already excited right in here."

He was right. It was surprising, but my body had become used to gay sex.

"With just my finger in you, you're already twitching. What a lewd body."

Suzuki liked to verbally tease me. And I didn't want to admit it, but each time he poured these cruel words on me, my body shook with desire and made me fall deeper into this inescapable feeling.

"Well, I wonder how many fingers can go in?"

One finger, two fingers – Suzuki counted as he slowly inserted his slender fingers, which were slender for a man, inside me.

"Even three fingers aren't enough? Should I put in all five?" he said this terrifying thing, but never actually did it. He never hurt me. "I wonder... what does it take to make you feel really good?" he said in a singsong voice and came down on top of my naked body. Then he screwed his excited cock into the place where several of his fingers had been.

Suzuki looked kind, but what he did was atrocious. It made me fear that I was no match for him because every time he visited this room, violently seeking my body, he urged me to fall into a series of climaxes and made me lose all sense of time. Usually, he

didn't use bondage, but sometimes he bound my wrists when we did it.

"I need to punish you, alright?" He announced, smiling. The reason for my 'punishment' was that I hadn't touched the food or hadn't slept in the bed at night. If I were to guess, I'd say he was probably being considerate of me. However, when he tied my wrists to the bed during sex, it aroused me and made me fall into chaos more than usual. Suzuki didn't only bind my wrists, sometimes he tightly wrapped a ribbon around my cock when I was about to come, and fucked me from behind.

"No!...It hurts!...Ah!...Ah!...Ah!!"

When I begged him to untie it, he didn't stop moving his hips back and forth and tightly held my wrists so that I wouldn't be able to undo the bounds. Then he whispered into my ear, "Looks like you get more excited when you're teased."

"No...!"

As I shook my head and said no to the chuckling Suzuki, I really did feel a little like a masochist. I felt myself grow so ecstatic that it felt like I was almost going crazy, because he attacked me from behind as he toyed with the tip of my cock, creating this restless feeling in me of not being able to come when I wanted to come.

"Today, let's see if you can come from just your nipples."

When Suzuki found out that I was somewhat of a masochist, he took advantage of it sometimes. He tried to arouse me by making me feel ashamed of the things he told me and the things he did to me.

"How is it? Are you getting turned on?"

Just as he had said that he was going to make me come from just my nipples, he began to pluck at my nipples with such strength that it hurt.

"No.....!"

I was completely unaware that a man's nipples could also be an erogenous zone, until I felt my cock pulsate with heat and my body shake each time he tormented my nipples. My cock in particular was reacting to the pain in my nipples. He crushed them with his teeth and plucked them with such strength that I felt like they were going to come off, and with that, I grew so aroused that I almost felt like I was going to come, but it really is rather difficult to come from just your nipples. Feeling dissatisfied, I writhed as Suzuki caressed me, because I itched for the lower part of his body.

"That won't do. I told you from just your nipples, okay?" Suzuki smiled, and before I even knew what was going on, he grabbed my hands and put them over each one of my nipples.

".....Eh.....?"

Suzuki smiled kindly at me when I questioned him, and then told me something

shocking and far from kind.

“If I can’t make you come, then see if you can do it yourself.”

“...No...”

I can’t do an embarrassing thing like toy with my own nipples, I thought, shaking my head no, but Suzuki was not forgiving.

“Come on now, quickly.”

He was forcefully making me pick at my own nipples.

“No.....!”

When I tried to take my fingers away, he said something very tempting all the while smiling kindly.

“If you toy with your own nipples, I will put it in as your reward,” he said, raised my legs and exposed my already twitching anus. I couldn’t stand it anymore. Abandoning my hesitation, I began to viciously pick at my own nipples.

“No.....!”

“You toy with yourself and arouse yourself...you truly are lewd.”

It felt like an electric shock was running through my body. I panted, unable to stand it anymore as Suzuki’s laughter rang in my ear.

“No.....! AH!.....”

His misty black eyes stared down at me as I fell into chaos, and his red lips whispered dirty words. Just by the looks of this and just by listening to his beautiful voice, an unbearable feeling overtook my body, and my completely hard cock pulsated wildly.

“You’re going to come already, aren’t you?” Suzuki chuckled and stared at my bulging, dripping cock.

“Noo.....!”

With this unbearable feeling, I began to pinch my nipples with all my might, and then finally reached climax, scattering milky white fluid everywhere around me.

“So you really can come from just your nipples!”

Chuckling, Suzuki raised both of my legs and rubbed his hard cock over my anus.

“Ah.....!”

My cock pulsated wildly as it continued leaking semen, but then immediately began to take form again even though I had just climaxed.

“...Your body is truly lewd. Quite a greedy one,” Suzuki said in an amazed tone of voice, and my cock started reacting again to his malicious words and to his actions.

“I’m coming in,” Suzuki laughed at this and screwed his cock inside me.



“Aah.....!”

My soft insides squirmed, having finally received what they wanted and tightened around the tip of his cock.

“.....I’m happy.”

Suzuki chuckled again, adjusted his grip on my legs, and inserted his whole cock inside me.

“Aah...!”

My loud gasps echoed throughout the room. Suzuki continued to violently thrust, and as I listened to my own voice, I fell into a boiling pot of ecstasy.

* * * *

My days of lust continued. In the afternoon and of course at night Suzuki would stay in my room, but when I opened my eyes in the light-filled room the next morning, he was always already gone. It seemed that after indulging in ecstasy with me, he always left before the sun arose. I felt kind of lonely because of this. I didn’t know whether waking up alone made me feel lonely or if there was some other reason.

No, actually, I probably ‘knew’ why, but I desperately turned a blind eye towards it. Every day, Suzuki wore the same black turtleneck sweater and pants when he came to see me, and every time he came to see me, he had sex with me. All I did, besides writhe in pleasure, was sleep, because I was dead tired from doing this everyday, and as it continued like this, I gradually found it troublesome to even think. I only chased after the pleasure he gave me when he pried open my body. I didn’t care if this was a dream or reality anymore. I didn’t care about anything anymore. Sometimes, I gazed absentmindedly at the scenery outside the window – the clouds, the sun, and occasionally, the flicker of snow. It wasn’t like I had lost sense of tomorrow, but fatigue was leaving my body hollow and taking away all of my ability to think. Only when Suzuki had sex with me, did I actually feel anything, and that’s how I spent my days.

Yes, only pleasure stirred my nerves. Sometimes when we did it, in-between orgasms, I thought about the ‘reason’ he had previously told me for keeping me here. I was certain that he had said that the reason was that I had remembered him. He also had told me that he had failed in the brainwashing. At that time – when we were in sixth grade at elementary school – no one had even remembered his family. Perhaps that was the ‘brain washing’ he had referred to. Parents, children, and teachers forgot him and his family. Everyone forgot, except me. Even though I had been mentally disoriented due to having a high fever from rubella, I had been the only one who still had any recollection of

him. Twelve years had passed and I still remembered him even though he had thought that he had erased his existence. Was my existence a nuisance to ‘him’ or to ‘them’?

“My real name is...”

His jet black eyes had glistened when he had almost told me his name. Just who in the world was he? Were ‘they’ spies from some country? Or could they be aliens? I thought about this over and over as we did it, but when pleasure took over me, I stopped thinking.

When this happened, I didn’t care about the ‘reason’ anymore. I only cared about the strong arms, pinning me down and holding me. Beautiful, black eyes watched me as I indulged in pleasure. It wasn’t too long ago that I began to wonder, as I tightly wrapped my arms and legs around him while having sex with him, just how long could I hold him like this? Somehow, I couldn’t help but feel scared that the day will come when I would have to let go of this beautiful, well-defined back which was hidden beneath clothes.

And then.....

Unexpectedly the ‘end’ came. One day, I woke up because I felt that the room was cold. The sweet scent that always inhabited the room was also gone. Shivering from the cold, I looked around as I wondered what on earth had happened. At that moment, the door opened with a creek and he entered the room. Somehow, he did not look like his usual self. He had a solemn look on his face. He was carrying my suit – the one I had been wearing that day he had brought me here – in his hands. As I frowned, looking at him, he simply said, “Let’s go home.”

And with that, handed me my clothes. At that time, I probably should have asked what had happened, but I obeyed him, quickly taking the clothes from him and putting them on. Then he guided me out of the building and into the car, which stood waiting outside. When I looked at the GPS screen, which told me the car’s location on the highway, I knew for the first time that the place in which I had been imprisoned had been Karuizawa. He didn’t say a word as we drove in the car and since there were no delays in traffic, it was probably a weekday. When I reached into my pocket, I discovered my watch. I looked at the date. What day was it anyway? On top of that, I didn’t even know what month it was. When we got on the Chuo Expressway, he muttered a single sentence I could barely hear as he sat in the driver’s seat.

“...I don’t want you to forget.”

“Eh?”

What did he say just now? I thought, inadvertently looking him hard in the face.

Suzuki muttered again, still looking straight ahead.

“Don’t forget,” he muttered this time and didn’t open his mouth to say another word after that. For some reason, I, too, couldn’t say anything, and since the radio wasn’t on, we sat in this silence as we drove and stared out the front car window.

When we reached Tokyo, we got off the expressway. His destination was the train station I used to commute to work and it was also the place where we had happened to run into each other. He drove the car down the main street, which ran in front of the train station. We will arrive there soon, I thought, and I peeked at him as he sat in the driver’s seat beside me.

“.....Is it far from the train station?” He asked, perhaps sensing my gaze.

“About five minutes on foot...” I muttered, but the whole time I couldn’t suppress this restless feeling in my chest – should I part with him?

“Then, I’ll drop you off at the station,” he said, and then for the first time looked at me and smiled.

“.....”

I nodded, speechless at his magnificent smile. He smiled at me one more time before returning his gaze to the front again. We turned on the roundabout and stopped at the bottom of the stairs, which lead up to the train station. My hand didn’t go towards the door, for I wondered if he was going to tell me to get out. The sound of a horn blazed. This was probably to tell us not to park here. Then a taxi passed by and the driver yelled some jeers at us. But since I continued to sit there, he got out of the driver’s seat, came over to my side of the car and opened the door for me.

“...When I first met you...” he muttered after he returned to the driver’s seat. “I think I fell in love.”

“Eh...?”

I couldn’t hear this last part too well. I think I heard what I wanted to hear, so I asked him to repeat himself as I peered at him.

“...Never mind...”

When he smiled again this time, it looked forced, and then he suddenly grabbed my arm, pulled me close to him, and brushed his lips against mine in a kiss.

“.....”

I was so surprised by this sudden kiss, that I didn’t even close my eyes and just stared at him when he pulled away.

“.....I’m sorry.”

When he muttered this, a horn blazed impatiently from behind. He put his hand on my back and let me out of the car, then stretched out his hand again and closed the

passenger door. With that, he quickly drove off. Unable to hold back the tears in my eyes, I couldn't move from the spot and continued to stare after the small red spec of light until I could no longer see the taillights of the car as it drove away.

People looked back at me suspiciously as they passed me by, but I just couldn't leave that spot. As the ends of my suit fluttered in the wind, I stood there, in front of the train station, forever and ever gazing after his car that had driven away down this main street.

* * * *

There was uproar after that. It seemed that I had been missing for ten days. I thought that I should go to work the next day, but the moment I showed up at the office, I was attacked with, "Where in the world did you disappear to?"

The entire office was in confusion. Even my parents, who lived in Tokyo, came to see me at the office. It seemed that they had even filed a missing persons report to the police, and my mother clung to me, crying.

"Everyone was so worried!" she said, beating my chest over and over. When I was done apologizing to everyone, I decided to escort my mother and father back to their home, which I hadn't been to in a long time. As I swayed with the motion of the train, I suddenly remembered:

"Do you remember?" I asked, turning to my mother.

"What?" My weary mother replied quietly, perhaps tired from crying.

"When I was in sixth grade in elementary school I got rubella, and when I came back to school, I made a big deal that 'an exchange student named Suzuki-kun had disappeared', remember?"

I guess I wanted to confirm this. That the events, which had happened up until yesterday, had not been a dream; that there really did exist a man who called himself Suzuki.

"Eh?" However, mother just gave me a puzzled look and began to smile, saying, "Oh, nooo!"

When I looked back at her questioning her what was so funny, mother continued speaking while smiling.

"Dear, you got rubella after getting the job at the company! Don't you remember I even came to your apartment to take care of you?"

Mother laughed, asking if I was trying to be funny, and I inadvertently let out a little gasp. That's right. It was around this time one year ago that I had gotten rubella.

Because I got rubella as an adult, I had quite a high fever and had been very sick.

“Besides, what do you mean, you said ‘an exchange student named Suzuki-kun had disappeared’? ...My dear, you went from elementary all through high school with Suzuki-kun, don’t you remember?” Mother laughed, adding, “What are you saying all of a sudden?” But then she peered at me worriedly with a serious look on her face when I suddenly fell into silence. “...Are you alright? What on earth happened?”

“...I’m alright,” I nodded, not wanting to make my mother worried. My memories returned to me in a flash, making me dizzy, and I was at my wit’s end as they say in popular literature. That’s right. Even in high school, Suzuki had always been in the same class as me, ever since the second semester in elementary school when we were in sixth grade, actually. Suddenly, Suzuki’s face became clear in my mind. He had an attractive face with slanted eyes and looked nothing like ‘him’. This made me wonder how in the world did that ‘Suzuki’ – that man – know me?

“Yasumasa?” Mother shook my shoulder. I nodded, letting her know that I was all right. Burying my face in my hands, I recalled his beautiful black eyes.

“I don’t want you to forget.”

He had muttered those words.

“When I first met you...I think I fell in love.”

Could it be that the first time he had met me had been at the train station when I had an anemic attack ten days ago? Maybe that was when he had fallen in love with me...? He had altered my memory and made it as if I had known him in the past. For that reason, he had held me captive, violated my body, and...

“Don’t forget.”

He had a sad light in his black eyes. Yes. I was already a slave to those eyes. I, myself, did not want to forget him.

“Yasumasa?” Mother shook my shoulder, and I silently gripped her hand to let her know I was all right. I couldn’t speak or lift my face. I didn’t want mother to see my tear-stained cheeks. The train shook greatly as it rounded a curve, and an announcement went off inside the compartment declaring the upcoming train station. It was the train station where I had ‘first met him’. We passed that train station, because right now my parents and I were heading towards my parents’ home.

Would I ever see him again? From now on, I would probably continue living with only that thought in mind, dreaming of whether I’d see those black, beautiful eyes again – the eyes of a person whom I didn’t even know the age, origin, or real name of – and praying for a new memory with him that would be spun by his hand.

Long after that, I believed that it had been a fated encounter. If I didn't believe that the events of those ten days – the days when I was isolated from the 'reality' I had previously lived – were 'tossed by fate', then my body and mind would be crushed from shock. Before I knew it, I began to hold myself as I remembered the powerful way he had deeply fucked me with his thick cock when he had held me.

"Your body is so lewd."

He had said those malicious words, but his black eyes had narrowed kindly, and his fine-shaped lips had slowly descended, seeking my own. I clearly remembered that and felt extremely lonely that I could not be in his arms. I couldn't stand thinking those thoughts, so today as well, I thought of him as just an image and tried to convince myself that the ten days we had spent together had been spent in Enlightenment. All the while, reminiscing about his misty, beautiful, black eyes.

「Oblivion: Chapter 3」

“I don’t want you to forget.”

These words sometimes haunt me. It had already been over a year since I heard him mutter that, but I could not forget him in the slightest, surely because these words had cast a spell over me.

I wanted to forget that memory.

The beautiful face I could still see vividly in my mind, the moist lips, those black twinkling eyes, those long fingers, and white throat. The moment I close my eyes, I am seized with that image of him.

But I don’t only see his image. I continue to feel his erect cock pierce through me and continue to feel his fingers, hands, and legs wrap around my body. Remembering those slender fingers squeezing my outstretched hands, those red lips covering my lips, the sweat on our bodies mixing together, gives me an overpowering pleasure. That man had violated my body persistently for several days. That man had taught my body a pleasure I hadn’t even known existed. When I remember that man, the ecstasy he had given me rushes through my entire body and without even knowing why, I am attacked by a sense of guilt.

That sense of guilt; what was I feeling guilty over? Perhaps I felt guilty towards God who forbids adultery between men? Fortunately, I’m an atheist. Besides, it’s not like I had wanted to commit adultery with him.

“I don’t want you to forget.”

I wanted to forget. I *wanted* to forget that memory! If I could erase the memory of those several days he had abused me from my head, I would be able to live a quiet life again.

I wanted to forget that memory.

“Do you want to forget?”

Red phantom lips whisper to me. I want to forget.

“So, you decided you want to forget, hmm?” Red lips whisper again, sneering at me as I shake my head yes.

“Really?”

I want to forget, I’m about to answer, but red lips cover mine.

“You don’t want to forget.”

I want to forget, I want to forget, I think, struggling as his slender arms pin my arms and legs, and as his image violates me, that is the only feeling I have in my heart.

"I don't want you to forget."

It remains in my ears. His spell.

And his black eyes capture me.

* * * *

The office easily accepted my leave of work notice, which stated that I wasn't feeling well. It seemed that my manager was worried about me acting strange ever since I had returned after being missing.

"No worries. Take it easy," he said, patting my shoulder. But 'taking it easy' was not guaranteed to happen. There was a rumor that according to the regulations at the firm, nobody had their position reinstated after leaving work for half a year. Being an S.E. is most likely a serious profession, one you should not easily quit from, so I had great doubts that I'd be able to find another job with my current level of experience. Nevertheless, I was at my limit and didn't think I could continue my everyday life, so there was no choice other than to take a leave of absence.

Commuting to work everyday was very hard. Working at the office was harder. When I worked at my computer, I became more and more depressed. Just thinking that day after day I had to do this, made me sink into a terrible depression. Somehow, I was making it to work, but at work, my mind was in a daze and I was working so inefficiently that it was terrifying. When I found out that everyone was not happy with me, it only gave me more of an incentive to be depressed, until finally, I could not stand to face this vicious cycle of being inefficient at work any longer. My coworker hinting if I knew about the 'leave of absence program' was the last straw which made me decide to confront my manager today in order to get his approval for leaving the office.

"I think it's best you seek medical help," my manager said, stretching out a sheet of paper towards me.

"....?"

Wondering what it was, I looked down to see the name of a large hospital in Kanagawa and the words "Department of Psychotherapy".

"I did think that this was perhaps unnecessary, but our local clinic strongly approved of this. If you'd like, you can obtain a letter of introduction from the department. Why don't you give it a try, alright?"

Perhaps because it was difficult for him to say this, my manager averted his eyes from me and stretched out the paper closer towards me.

"I'm not forcing you, but rather than bearing all of the burden yourself, I think

you'd recover faster if you received doctor's help," he said, stood up, and patted me on the shoulder again, telling me, "Hang in there".

"Okay" I said.

Psychotherapy, huh? Although I realized I was 'depressed', I didn't think I had reached the state of seeking medical help for it, but my manager was probably right. I thought I should at least go there once to hear what the doctor has to say about my condition instead of pointlessly missing work.

I rarely thought such positive things. Perhaps I was thinking this because I knew I didn't have to come to work anymore starting tomorrow. I will do as my manager had told me and obtain a letter of introduction from the clinic. I will probably never return to the office again. It wasn't like I had been praying for this to happen, it's just that being discharged was something that was inevitable for me. I left the company I had worked at for three years, probably never to return again.

* * * *

After that, I spent two or three days just doing nothing. It was the cherry blossom season, and all day long, I just lay around and absent-mindedly looked out the window at the flower petals blowing in the air. But on the third day, I grew tired of doing nothing. I grew scared that I was going to spend my six months off from work like this, so I finally got my heavy legs to move and went down to Chigasaki Hospital to obtain the introduction letter. Although I got there quite early, the hospital was pretty crowded. Even the Department of Psychotherapy was bustling. Finally, it was my turn, but it was practically noon already, and I was the last medical examinee for the morning appointments. All of the people sitting on the sofa in the corridor were supposedly waiting in line for the psychotherapy session like me, but nobody, nobody looked like they needed help from a psychiatrist.

When my turn finally came, I was exhausted because I had been waiting in that dim corridor for three hours. Although I now had to face the doctor, as I headed towards the designated room I thought, should I really do this? When I reached the room, I gave a light knock on the door and opened it.

"Come in."

I heard a calm voice say from within the room. At that moment, I suddenly had a feeling of déjà-vu but I didn't know what to associate the feeling with.

"Excuse me."

I bowed, thinking, perhaps it's funny to say 'excuse me' to a doctor. When I

raised my head and looked inside the room, I...

“Ah...”

I was so shocked I remained standing where I was.

“How may I help you?”

Illuminated by the dazzling light of the sun falling from the window was that beautiful face I had not forgotten for even a day since then.

“Please have a seat.”

Those black eyes that narrowed at me with a smile. Those fine-shaped red lips. That beauty mark by the mouth.

“Ah.....”

As if I had become an aphasic, I could not get any words to come out from my throat. That image had chased me and had invaded my mind for one year and now it simply let me knock on the door of this psychotherapy room. I had not forgotten him for even a day since then – this man who called himself Suzuki. This man stretched out his right hand towards me.

“How may I help you?”

It was unmistakably him. That well featured white face, that beautiful, low but ringing, voice, and that smell of cologne on his body. All of these things proved that it was him, but why was this man acting like he didn't know me?

“You look pale...are you feeling light headed?”

The moment he pressed his cold palm to my forehead, I felt that I was blacking out. Collapsing into his strong arms, the last thing I saw before losing consciousness was the fine-shaped red lips, looking almost as if upturned into a slight smile.

* * * *

How much time had passed? When I abruptly opened my eyes, I was surprised to see an unfamiliar ceiling. Finally, I noticed and was surprised again to find that I was in a hospital bed and covered with a white hospital blanket. Because I had just awoken, I was feeling dazed.

Somehow, I had a feeling that I was in a doctor's office. Wondering why I was resting here, I sat up and was startled to see a spacious room I didn't recognize. Now I was completely awake. That's right. I came to the hospital and after that...

As I looked around the room I was in, it looked like an inpatient ward to me. On top of that, it was a one-patient room.



The setting sun outside the window dyed everything red.

How long have I been passed out? I thought. But when I searched for the clock, I saw that there wasn't one in the room, so I looked at my wrist but noticed that I wasn't wearing my wristwatch either! I was in a room with nothing in it, not even a clock. I didn't know why I was being kept here in this unfamiliar place. I remembered those arms that held me in that room back at that log house villa.

"You look pale...are you feeling light headed?"

That cold palm that had touched my forehead definitely belonged to 'him'. Why was he here? Why was that image here again in front of me?

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door, startling me. I trembled as I watched the door open.

"Oh, you're awake."

Standing there was an elderly nurse. In the nurse's hand was a blood pressure meter.

"Please let me take your blood pressure."

She quickly moved towards me, instructed me to lie back down on the bed and began to take my blood pressure.

"Um..."

What on earth had happened? I was just about to ask her, but...

"Please be quiet for a minute, okay...?" She silenced me as she looked at the apparatus with a serious look on her face. She checked the final number displayed on the screen.

"Alright. Looks fine," she said, smiling.

"Um....."

I didn't know what was going on. Once she saw how confused I looked, she understood, nodding.

"You suddenly collapsed during the medical exam. For some reason, today the emergency department is busy and all the beds in the emergency room are occupied, so we brought you here to this vacant room to rest...how are you feeling?"

Peering at me, she spoke slowly as if addressing a child.

"I'm alright."

The nurse was being too considerate of me, perhaps because I had collapsed at the Department of Psychotherapy.

"According to the doctor, you hit your head quite hard when you collapsed. Just to be safe, he instructed that you rest here for one night. Tomorrow, he says he will give you a detailed examination. But you say you seem alright? Do you want to contact your

family?”

Doctor. The moment I heard that, those beautiful black eyes flashed into my mind. That strange twinkle inside those kindly, smiling eyes.

“Shimizu-san?”

Because I was spacing out, she peered at me again, sounding worried. I quickly apologized, saying, “I’m sorry” and then told the nurse that it was not necessary to contact my family.

“Then please rest up. If you’re not feeling well, use this.”

The nurse slipped me an emergency call button.

“Please call that. You hit your head, so things might seem a little strange to you, but don’t hesitate to call, okay?” she reminded me.

“Okay.....”

“Dinner is at six; lights out at nine. There is a toilet in this room and a bath as well, so you don’t have to leave the room. Well then, I will come again later to take your temperature, okay?”

The nurse quickly told me. Then the last thing she said was a see you later, showed me an angelic smile and hurriedly left the room. My head didn’t hurt in the slightest considering I supposedly had hit my head.

What was happening? I thought as I returned the emergency call button back to its place, lay back down on the bed, and looked at the ceiling.

“I don’t want you to forget.”

As much as one year had passed since then. Had I really met him again now?

“What’s wrong?”

It seemed like he hadn’t remembered me at all. I thought that face, that voice, and that cold palm all belonged to him, but perhaps I had simply mistaken him with someone else. Maybe I was convinced that someone who wasn’t him at all was him. I hadn’t realized that my mind had been wounded so much. I couldn’t even say with certainty whether I remembered suddenly collapsing on the spot. Did I want to see him that much? I thought.

“I don’t want you to forget.”

Those words were like a spell. They were still binding me, weren’t they? I myself didn’t think I wanted to see him.

“I don’t want to forget.”

I thought I didn’t think that. The more I thought about this, the more I felt myself be deeper hung up on it. I pulled the blanket over my head, deciding to try to force myself to sleep and not think about anything. When dinner arrived at six o’clock, I declined to

eat, because I had no appetite. Tightly shutting my eyes, all I wanted was to escape to the world of sleep.

How much time had passed? As I had hoped, it seemed that I had fallen asleep without even realizing it. The door slightly opened with a click, and a thin ray of light flowed into the room through the crack in the doorway. Were they going to take my temperature again? They had taken it just a few hours ago. I turned my back to the light, thinking it was so annoying. Turning in my bed, I tried to slip under my blanket, but at that moment, the blanket was suddenly ripped off of me. Surprised, I opened my eyes, and standing right there was...

“It’s been a while.”

It was the man in a white lab coat who had presented himself as a doctor to me this afternoon. It was him – that beautiful, white man whom I couldn’t forget about this past year even if I tried.

「Oblivion: Chapter 4」

“...What...?”

The first thing that came to my head was the thought that maybe I was dreaming. All I could do was stare at him as he stood there in his white lab coat, with my mouth open like an idiot, while he dropped the blanket he had ripped off of me to the floor.

“I wanted to see you.”

I felt him leaning over me. This was not a dream. This was clearly reality.

“Did you want to see me, too?” he chuckled and his breath hit my lips.

“.....No –”

His lips covered my lips when I tried to deny it.

“.....!”

This took me back in time. This was the same kiss from one year ago. His tongue powerfully violated the inside of my mouth making me sigh through the openings in our kiss.

When he chuckled lightly as he kissed me, I opened my eyes, and he withdrew from me.

“.....”

The air hit my wet lips making me feel extremely cold. I frowned, unable to explain why I felt dread, and he smiled and then said this as if it were a natural thing to say.

“Take your clothes off.”

“.....Huh?”

“Quickly,” he said as he abandoned his white lab coat and began to loosen his tie. As I stared at him dumbfounded, he said again, “Take off your clothes,” and jerked his head as a sign to prompt me.

Acting completely on their own, my hands began to undo the buttons on my shirt. Seeing me do this, he smiled again, undid his cuff buttons and dropped his shirt to the floor. As if being lured into this, I also dropped my shirt. He continued undressing, his hands now on his belt. He lowered his slacks together with his underwear and took off his socks as well, becoming completely naked. Seeing his naked body in front of me, I lay down on the bed and invited him.

“Show me,” he said, laughing and pulled me up by my arm into a sitting position again.

“.....Eh?”

I looked at him confused, and he smiled, narrowing his beautiful eyes at me.

“...Flip over. Get down on your hands and knees,” he said, powerfully pulling on my arm again. I did as I was told. I turned my back to him and got down on my hands and knees into a doggy position. I didn’t really know why I was obeying him. There was an odd foggy feeling in my head, but strangely, I didn’t have any disgust, the desire for him to stop, or any other negative feelings towards him.

“Lift your hips.”

Again I did as I was told and lifted my hips up high. He put his hands on my behind and I felt him spread it in two.

“...As always, it’s a beautiful color.”

I heard him chuckle and the next moment I felt something warm assault me there. Inadvertently, I looked over my shoulder to find that he had his face buried in my behind.

“No.....!”

At that moment, my heart began to beat faster. As he spread me apart with both his hands, he continued sucking and licking me there, making a lot of wet noise as if on purpose.

He inserted the tip of his tongue, rubbed it inside of me, and lightly bit the fleshy parts surrounding my anus.

“...Ah...!”

With his hands on my buttocks, he lifted my hips up higher. I buried my face in the sheets, my elbows bent and the palms of my hands stuck to the bed. My inner thighs trembled from this difficult stance, but this wasn’t only because it was difficult. My legs began to tremble when I felt waves of pleasure gradually rising from the lower part of my body. One year ago, he had fucked me so hard that it had made me climax over and over again and had even made me lose consciousness. A raring feeling was sprouting inside me now. I wanted a hotter and larger mass inside of me instead of the tongue.

When he suddenly stopped caressing me there, without thinking, I violently swayed my hips as if imploring him to continue. With that, he removed his tongue from there and I realized my own shamelessness. Inadvertently, I wanted to apologize for this and looked over my shoulder at him.

“You didn’t let anyone...?”

The smile on his smiling face was like a flower. I silently gave a deep nod as I looked at his beautiful smiling face, but I had no idea what he had meant when he had asked me that.

“You didn’t let anyone touch you here for one year?”

As he said this, he inserted his finger all the way into the wet opening.

“Mhmm,” I nodded and felt a squirming feeling down there as if I were tightening around his finger.

“You were waiting for me?”

He grasped the fleshy part on my buttocks and forced the opening wider. Then he suddenly inserted another finger and began to violently pull his fingers in and out, stirring it up inside me.

“No.....!”

I arched my back backwards from this sudden act and twisted my body forward, trying to escape. But he wrapped one hand around my stomach, pulled me closer to him, and continued to violently churn in up inside me.

“Ah!.....No!.....Aah.....!”

His long, slender fingers rummaged deeper inside me. These fingers, which had lead me to a peak one year ago, wiggled inside me again.

“Were you waiting?”

His voice rang as if he were singing. I nodded over and over and swayed my hips to the violent movement of his fingers, which betrayed the kindness in his voice.

“.....I.....was waiting, too,” he muttered.

Had these words actually come out from his mouth or had I imagined them? I couldn't tell anymore. I violently swayed my hips, desiring for more power, and he lightly smacked my buttocks as if saying he understood. Then pulled out his fingers.

“Ah.....!”

I let out scream-like gasps, and the squirming down there was so violent, it was scary. He chuckled again above me. I itched for him to be inside me. As the violent squirming continued down there, he suddenly screwed his erect cock inside me.

“Ah.....!”

I felt myself stop breathing from his sudden thrust, but this was precisely the strength I had wished for. I wished for a deeper connection, so inadvertently, I thrust up my buttocks closer to him. He grasped one of my legs, and with that, lifted my leg up high, turned me to the side and began violently thrusting.

“Ah!.....Haa.....! Ah!.....Aah.....!”

It hurt to have half of my body float in the air, but as his cock dwelled deeper inside me over and over, the painful feeling disappeared. With every thrust, I felt like something heavy was being hammered into my body. When I realized that I desired that mass, I started to violently hit my own hips against him. Eventually, his never-ending, pump-like thrusts made my mind grow dim. Suddenly, he reached for my erect cock.



“No.....!”

It seemed I tightened around him the moment he grasped it.

“Urgh.....”

I let out a soft pained moan as he laughed and began moving his hand over my cock.

“Ah!.....Noo.....! AH!.....AH!.....AH.....!”

Pleasure made me arch my back backwards, and my leg he had been holding up in the air slipped out, perhaps because his hand was sweating. He grabbed my leg again and lifted it up high into the air. He attacked me from both the front and the back as I moaned like a beast, until finally, I climaxed into pleasure, releasing a milky white fluid into his hand.

“Ngh!”

It seemed that because I violently tightened around him he came inside me. I felt the thickness of his semen inside me. It was an indescribable feeling of satisfaction. He lowered himself on top of me and pressed his lips to mine.

“.....Ah!.....Haa.....!”

His kiss prevented me from breathing, and when I shook my head no, he suddenly withdrew.

“.....I wanted to see you,” still wildly gasping, he quietly muttered this.

“.....Ah!.....Haa.....”

Me too, I wanted to say, but couldn't get the words to come out. He smiled again and once again violently pressed his lips to mine as if trying to prevent me from breathing. It seemed that because it was difficult for me to breathe, I lost consciousness without even realizing it.

* * * *

I had a dream. He was completely naked except a white lab coat draped over his shoulders as he looked down on my naked body.

“You didn’t want to forget?”

His large eye twinkled, absorbing the light from the lamp on the bedside table. Mesmerized by the beauty, I gave a deep nod. Mhmm.

“You wanted to forget, right?”

Chuckling, he brought his face close to mine. His fingers on my chest clawed at my erect nipples. Body shaking, I desperately shook my head no, trying to transmit my resolve.

I didn't want to forget. I wanted to see you again. I wanted you to hold me again.

Right...?

Inadvertently, I asked my dream self that. My dream self looked straight back at me and gave me a deep nod. Mhmm.

"You didn't want to forget?"

The question repeated. My dream self gave a deep nod again. Mhmm. And hugged him as he loomed over my dream self. He placed his hands on my hair and gently brushed through it.

That...

That's absurd, is what I should have been thinking, but at that time, I had so much envy in my heart towards my dream self that I burned.

I want his hand, too – I desired, stretching my hand out towards them.

I awoke with a start. I was lying in bed, and for some reason, I was dressed very warmly. Bewildered as to why my belt was tightly buckled and my shirt buttoned all the way up to my neck, I sat up, looked around me and finally saw the blanket that had fallen to the floor. I slowly picked it up. I expected to be lying here covered with sweat and semen. I thought he – that man – had been here next to me and had held me in his sweaty hands. Violently confused, I looked at my clothes again and at the bed sheets, expecting them to be wrinkled, because I had scrunched them up, but the bed sheets were smoothed out as if they had been ironed and not a single piece of evidence remained of what we had done. I was dressed in the same clothes I had been wearing when I had arrived in the morning. This confused me even more. When I suddenly grasped my wrist, I noticed that I had my wristwatch again. I slowly rolled up the cuff of my shirt.

The arrow on the clock indicated three o'clock. It was three o'clock in the middle of the night right now? What on earth did that mean?

I got up off the bed and turned on the light in the room. There was no sign that anyone besides me had been inside the room.

Could it have been a dream?

That's absurd, I was about to laugh but couldn't.

A dream?

Wow, I thought, sitting down on the bed and placing my face in my hands.

"I wanted to see you."

Did I think that wildly gasping, whispering voice had been my dream? Did I think that deep, overpowering pleasure, which made me forget myself, had all been a dream? Was his thick semen, the indescribable bliss I had received, and the power of the violent thrusts I had loudly called out for with desire all a.....

A dream?

Wow, I thought, starting to softly chuckle. What a dream! Was I frustrated that much? Did I want to see him that much?

“I wanted to see you.”

Had I been the one to whisper that? Chuckling at the stupid conclusion I had derived, I tightly shut my eyes and buried my face into the palm of my hand as if trying to prevent the tears from welling up in my eyes. As if trying to engrave his phantom smiling face that I saw clearly in the depth of my closed eyes.

I want to see you. I want to see you – was the only thought welling up inside of me. In the bottom of my heart, it truly surprised me that I wanted to see him this much. Nevertheless, I sobbed for hours as I sat on that bed until the night grew pale.

* * * *

The next morning, the doctor from the Department of Psychotherapy visited my hospital room. It wasn't 'him' at all. It was a middle-aged man with a good physique.

“You shouldn't worry about this too much.”

He patted me on the back, smiling and saying that we would consult about this matter again. I gave him an uncertain smile and nodded. After that, I got a CAT scan and it wasn't until the afternoon that I finally left the hospital. After they elucidated the result of my examination, they told me I could go home since everything seemed normal. The nurse escorted me towards the hospital entrance.

“Are you alright?”

Perhaps because I had been spacing out a little, the elderly nurse led me all the way to where the taxi cars were parked and helped me get inside the taxi.

“It's such nice weather today, isn't it?” she said, then mentioned how beautiful the cherry blossoms were. I nodded to please her so that she didn't feel like she was just talking to herself. Out of the car window I looked around me and then almost gasped out loud.

“Take care.”

As she waved, I thought I saw 'him' standing behind her in his fluttering white lab coat, but then his image suddenly disappeared into the crowd of people.

“What's wrong?” The nurse peered at the stunned look on my face, looking worried.

“Um...um, did the same doctor examine me today as well as yesterday?” My voice shook so much that it sounded unnatural even to me. For a moment, the nurse made

a funny face, looking confused, but then smiled, understanding.

“The doctor at the Department of Psychotherapy? Yes. Doctor Yamamoto is in charge here on Thursdays and Fridays, so yes, yesterday...,” she smiled at me.

A mixed feeling of both relief and disappointment filled my heart. It had been a dream after all.

It had been a dream, I smiled wryly. The nurse looked at me suspiciously and then suddenly exclaimed, “Oh, no” perhaps remembering something.

“No?”

“Yes. Yesterday there was a different doctor. I heard that yesterday Doctor Yamamoto was attending a funeral, so he was replaced on short notice.”

“Huh?” I gripped the window frame of the lowered down car window with all my might. Even I myself felt the color of my face change. ‘He’ actually existed? Then it had been him who had visited my hospital room last night? The nurse didn’t notice how shook up I was at all perhaps because she was proud that she had remembered this all by herself. She continued talking nonstop.

“It was an urgent funeral, but luckily, the substitute that he sent for was his former student. He is still a young doctor who comes here several times for night duty. If I remember correctly his name is...”

Just then, the car behind us beeped loudly to tell us to hurry and get a move on. The nurse quickly said, “Take care then, okay?”

Waved at me, bowed with apology to the taxi behind us and headed back towards the entrance.

“Um!”

I tried to get out of the car but, “Where to, sir?” a displeased taxi driver boomed at me.

“...To the train station.”

Even though I was sure I would know his name if I chased after her and asked her, I sank down, burying myself in the seat and told the blatantly displeased driver my destination. Did it.....did it mean that it had not been a dream?

“I wanted to see you.”

Did it mean that whisper, those lips, those black, smiling eyes were real? That’s absurd, I thought, but out of the corner of my eye, I had caught a fleeting glimpse of a tall figure wearing a white lab coat that fluttered with the wind.

* * * *

I stopped going to that Chigasaki Hospital since then. Even though if I had wanted to, I could check whether it had been a dream or reality, but I could not muster the courage to do so. After three months had passed, I suggested to my manger that my position be reappointed to me because I considered myself to have calmed down by now. The office just happened to be short on staff so I was easily allowed to return to my post. After that, time went by as usual and everyone forgot the fact that I was mentally unstable. I too, came to think that I was alright now.

The thing that made me recover was my firm belief that he existed. Surely, if I were to reach out to him, I would find him in that place.

"I don't want you to forget."

Sometimes, I answered to his ghostly whisper with a smile.

The day will never come when I will forget.

「Return: Chapter 5」

Just like a person's fate is uncertain, the fate of a company is also in darkness and it's unknown what would happen to it in the future. This spring, I came to experience this fact first hand. The company I had worked at for four years was merged with a new major software company and 'job security' was not an aspect of the merge, so a lot of employees were laid off. I was prepared to be the first one on that list of people being laid off, because I had been on a leave-of-work for three months, but fortunately, for some reason I was not fired. I was to join a major trading company and help create the new system accounting software – a new project that began in April after the merge.

The head office was located in Osaka, so I left Tokyo, my permanent home since birth, and came to live in Osaka at the company dormitory, which was far away from work. Being an introvert had always been my disposition and since a good number of my previous colleagues, as well as friends, had been laid off, it came to be that I practically knew no one at the firm. On top of that, since the head office was in Osaka, it was only natural that the Kansai dialect was everywhere.

I couldn't help but think how aggressive the unfamiliar the pronunciation of speech sounded, even though I knew the people speaking didn't intend it to be so.

Because of that, I became completely withdrawn, and before long, it became a pain to go to work. I thought about quitting work, but because it was hard to find employment these days, due to a shortage of jobs on the job market, I didn't have the courage to quit. Clearly, there was no way out for me.

One day, Shirai, a project leader, as well as a manager of one of the sections of the system, said to me, "How about we go get something to eat?"

Among all the people speaking Kansai dialect, Shirai mostly spoke standard Japanese, perhaps because we was a Kanto native. He was thirty-two years old and appeared very capable at his job. I heard that the young man had been entrusted with a rather important position of being a project leader by a special-case promotion. People said that he was quite a shrewd man, but he was actually soft-spoken. On top of that, when he passed by a group of people, he turned everyone's heads because he was so handsome. He was highly popular with the women in the office.

I didn't have the courage to refuse an invitation from my boss, so on the day Shirai invited me, I had to go out to eat with him, but the restaurant he had selected surprised me. Even though I was sure that he would take me to the casual restaurant by the office, the place that Shirai chose could hardly be called casual. It was an Italian

restaurant where it was deemed not unusual to serve on guests. The prices startled me, and I was at a loss about what to order.

I was unfamiliar with the restaurants in Osaka, but the customers at this particular restaurant were only rich, married couples and well-dressed salary men accompanied by beautiful young women.

“Choose what you’d like, but if you’re unsure, let’s settle on the full-course meal,” Shirai said to me, perhaps sensing that I was at a loss about what to choose. I thought we were getting the prix-fixe menu for two, but Shirai chose the most expensive ‘Chef’s Recommendation’ as if it were nothing.

Maybe he’s putting it on his expense account? I wondered.

I wanted to know if he was paying out of his own pocket, but naturally that was an impolite thing to ask. Nevertheless, when I tried to spy on him to see how he was paying, our eyes met and Shirai smiled.

“Nothing to be modest for. I chose this restaurant, because I’m fond of the cuisine and because no one from the company will come here.”

Although he told me I didn’t need to be modest, in my opinion, I thought I hadn’t been ‘modest’ from the start.

“I see...” was all I could say as I cast my eyes down.

“It seems you haven’t quite warmed up to your new environment. But frankly, I think this job is hard, isn’t it?” Shirai got straight to the point, after we clinked our glasses of sparkling wine in a toast.

“No, the job is not hard. All the problems are with me.”

I was scared of the Kansai dialect and I didn’t know anyone, but naturally, an adult with a healthy mentality would be able to overcome these types of problems. Even if I were to confide about this with somebody, they would just make me out into a fool and typically suggest I resign from my job. However, I didn’t tell any of that to Shirai, but Shirai’s next words were not something I was expecting.

“No need to condemn yourself. What is troubling you? Is it the unfamiliar Kansai dialect? Are you perhaps feeling lonely because there isn’t anyone to seek advice from? Ah, and yes, on top of everything, the food here doesn’t suit your taste, correct?”

“.....Well.....”

Everything he said applied to me. I was at a loss for words as to how he knew.

“I’m right, aren’t I?” Shirai smiled, narrowing his eyes. “I’ve felt all of that myself.”

“Are you from Tokyo, Mr. Shirai?”



I thought that he was, because of how he pronounced his words, and then he said “Yeah”, confirming it. Shirai nodded and told me his hometown.

“My family home is on the boulevard along the Chuo Line in Kunitachi.”

“Oh, so is mine!” What a coincidence! I exclaimed without thinking, but quickly quieted down, thinking I mustn’t be so loud here. A woman at a table next to ours turned around in surprise.

“A coincidence, indeed. Which area? I live on the west side.”

“I live in the center. Near Kunitachi Gakuen Elementary School...”

“I went to Gakuen Elementary.”

“I went to Nishou Elementary.”

Now that we found out we lived in the same vicinity, it was surprisingly easy to continue our conversation. We were six years apart in age, so we didn’t know the same people, but we talked a lot about the shops we had frequented when we had been students.

“Oh, that variety store is gone?”

“Yes, it became a Chinese chain restaurant now.”

“They remodeled the train station, too. Kunitachi has changed a lot.”

“I see.....”

From this, I understood that Shirai didn’t go to his parents’ home very much. Shirai forced a smile and shrugged his shoulders.

“Actually, I have cut ties with my parents. One thing led to another and it’s been ten years...no, twelve to thirteen years since I’ve seen them.”

“Eh?”

Cut ties? I was surprised to hear such a shocking thing and was at a loss for words again. I knew that cutting ties with one’s parents was devastating, so I immediately thought that I should avoid that topic and changed the subject.

“Not only did Kunitachi change, Tachikawa, our neighboring city, also changed. Places along Chuo Line are really changing. Musashi-Sakai station, also...”

“Ahaha! I’ve troubled you, haven’t I? Sorry,” Shirai laughed and cut me off.

“Ah, um...”

“I let that slip. I was just enjoying talking to you so much,” Shirai said smiling, and leaned a little towards me as he gazed into my eyes.

“You always have your head down at the office, but I think it’d be easier to talk to everyone if you looked up.”

“.....Ah, yes.....” I agreed, nodding. So this put an end to that topic of conversation. From this, I understood that he hadn’t been lying when he had said that he

had ‘cut ties’. After that, our conversation shifted to how much progress I had made in the task assigned to me and how I was settling into the dormitory.

“Oh, you’ve made a lot of progress, haven’t you? You don’t need to work so hard, you know,” he told me, regarding the progress of my work. Regarding the dormitory, he announced that I could move out if I found it inconvenient. “It’s a single room, but you probably can’t relax much in such a small space. You’re more sensitive than others, so why don’t you move out of the dormitory? I’ll show you some affordable apartments.”

Shirai smiled and added that his friend ran a real estate business. Before I could answer, he said that he would pick some out for me tomorrow. I immediately tried to pursue the conversation further.

“But, won’t that be a problem?”

The room and board fee was higher than I had expected, but it was definitely less than renting an apartment. Besides, practically all the single employees at the office who couldn’t commute to work from their parents’ home resided in the dormitory. Up until now, I had never experienced communal living, and living the dorm life where you had to use a public bath and eat in a cafeteria was honestly a pain.

I mean, I did have a single room, but the size of that room was only three tatami mats. By any standard, having your bed, closet, and desk all be built-in did not give you enough space to relax, and the walls of that room were so thin, you could hear the people next door. The people next door often had their stereo on during the night. Even though they were smart enough to lower the volume, I still couldn’t sleep because of the noise.

Hearing this noise made it seem like I had no privacy, so that was also quite a pain, but to move out of the dormitory.....I didn’t have the courage to do what other people didn’t do.

“It won’t be a problem. It wasn’t long before I moved out of the dormitory myself. Isn’t it unbelievable that it takes close to about one hour to get to work from there? There’s no definite rule that says you must live in the dormitory, anyways. In fact, it’s quite the opposite. Right now there’s a strong demand for dorm rooms, since it’s something they’re lacking at the moment, so they’ll be pleased if you move out and won’t have any complaints.”

“.....I see.....” for some reason I felt like I was being favored. I wondered if he took care of his subordinates like this in order to inspire them to work diligently on their projects. But it would become a problem if he took such ‘care’ towards all of his subordinates, I thought, intently gazing at Shirai’s face without even realizing it.

“What is it?”

Immediately noticing my gaze, Shirai smiled, narrowing his eyes again.

“No, I’m just.....I’m sorry.....”

I’m sorry for being a bad subordinate. I was about to say but stopped myself, thinking it sounded slavish. Nevertheless, it seemed that it had shown on my face, because he was being considerate again.

“No need to be sorry. I’m doing this, because I want to. I just want you to regain your smile.”

“.....I see.....”

He was showing me such hospitality, but when I heard him say that, I couldn’t stop myself from rudely feeling it set my teeth on edge.

Naturally, it would be ill of me to have him realize that I was thinking badly of him, so I looked down. Then I heard Shirai’s kind voice in my ear.

“I’ve probably offended you, but I mean it when I say I want you to smile. I’m more than willing to cooperate with you on that. I’d like to invite you out to eat like this again sometime, so I’d be glad if we could get together.”

“.....Thank you.”

When I looked up, I saw that Shirai was smiling a little shyly.

Perhaps because he was slightly drunk, his eyes were misty and reflected the twinkling flame of the candle on the table. The moment I thought that they looked beautiful, I felt uncomfortable. My former boss at the office had acted quite warmly towards me, because I had been mentally unstable at that time, but he had never done anything bold like invite me out to eat. A boss and subordinate are not family or even friends. Naturally, they’re not lovers either. It seemed that I had felt uncomfortable because Shirai’s invitation had sounded like he was trying to invite me out on a date. It was only after we had parted ways that I realized this, but I still pondered whether this was actually the reason for his superfluous care towards me.

* * * *

Shirai acted quickly. The next day, he called me to the conference room as soon as I arrived to work and showed me a map of an apartment, which he had received through a fax from his real estate friend.

How about this? He asked, handing me the map.

“Ah, well.....”

“Rent is sixty thousand². But you can apply to the company for a housing

² ¥ 60,000 is about \$600 USD

allowance grant just short of twenty thousand³. The room is about eight tatami mats, but the bath and toilet are separate and the building itself is new, so I think you'll be quite comfortable there. If you have time right after work, we could go see it?" He rattled on.

I was overwhelmed by this sales talk, but in the end, Shirai had convinced me, and on that day, in the evening, we went to see the apartment. While we were there, I agreed to sign the lease.

"Let's have you move-in this weekend. As for your luggage, I'll have them send it to you by car." Still, it felt wrong to have Shirai be so considerate towards me, so I declined this too much of a generous offer. "No need to be so reserved," he said and again won me over.

Naturally, I wasn't the only person working on the project. I was afraid that the other members would be unhappy that only I was receiving special treatment, but everyone acted the same towards me whether they noticed this or not.

After I moved into the apartment, both my body and mood felt so at ease that it was surprising. It seemed that communal living was something I could never get used to, and it had been more of a pain to me than I had thought. Besides, Shirai had noticed it, hadn't he? That's exactly why he had urged me to move so quickly. His intuition is amazing, I thought, deeply impressed. After that, I decided to always listen to Shirai's suggestions. Shirai didn't only take me out to eat, he took me out to various other places as well: the movies, the theater, and to his friend's house party too. That friend of his was a famous stylist, so there were models and actors whom I even knew names of at the party. I was getting so excited, I felt like a fan.

"You've cheered up." You're okay now? Shirai asked, smiling.

This is how I spent my days for one month after I had moved in.

One night, we went out for a light meal as usual on our way home from work, and when we sat down across from each other in Shirai's favorite fancy restaurant, I began to speak.

"I'm thankful to you Mr. Shirai."

After my mood had improved, I had become more efficient at work. I wanted to catch up with my work, because I had been holding back the whole project team. When I announced that, Shirai said, "You're not holding anyone back."

Not only did Shirai speak such kind words to me, he also said it from the bottom of his heart. I felt much obliged to him for that.

"I'm glad you've cheered up."

³ ¥ 20,000 is about \$200 USD

“.....I am very grateful.....” That you take such care of me, I said, feeling guilty, because I knew none of Shirai’s subordinates besides me were such a handful. Perhaps Shirai knew that I had taken a break for three months at my previous company, because I had been mentally damaged. He was probably worrying over me, hoping that I never go back to that state again. A boss is held responsible if his subordinate is suffering, that’s why he was acting so warmly towards me. This was the only reason, right?

Because of that, none of the other subordinates complained, even though he gave me special treatment and the company allowed me to receive a housing allowance when I didn’t even live in the dormitory. Clearly, it was a fact that Shirai took extra care of me. I’m sorry I’ve caused you trouble, I said, bowing, but Shirai cheerfully said,

“There’s nothing to apologize for. Like I told you before, I want to see your smile.”

“.....”

We had toasted with our wine, but both of our glasses were still half-full.

There was no way he was drunk. Shirai’s tone of voice and facial expression also did not look like he was joking. I had felt uncomfortable when he had told me this one-month ago, but now, I tried to dismiss this uncomfortable feeling by convincing myself that maybe Shirai was the type of person who said such forward things. But still, saying ‘I want to see your smile’ seemed like he was hitting on me, didn’t it? Shirai, being all-popular with women, wouldn’t hit on me, a man. I smiled wryly to myself.

“Hey, Shimizu,” Shirai called my name, having gotten a little impatient, because he couldn’t get inside my head of course.

“Ah, I’m sorry.” I inadvertently apologized.

Shirai widened his eyes in surprise and asked, “Why are you apologizing?”

“No, well, I was spacing out...” Obviously I couldn’t say that I was sorry for thinking that he was ‘being forward’ or that he ‘sounded like he was hitting on me’, so I lifted my wine glass to my mouth in a half-assed attempt to try to hide this.

“No, it’s okay,” Shirai gazed at me, smiling and looking like he was hesitating about something.

“...?”

The moment I was gulping down my wine, wondering what it was, Shirai said, “Shimizu-kun, I’m sorry if this is out of line, but are you gay?”

“...!”

I was so shocked to hear this that I choked, and Shirai quickly got up from his chair and went behind me to pat me gently on the back.

“Are you alright?”

“.....Ye- yes.....”

The wine had gone down the wrong side of my throat, so I couldn't quite stop coughing.

“Should I get you some water? Oh, here, you can use this for your mouth.”

I looked up over my shoulder at Shirai who was burning with consideration for me as he continued to pat my back, and I desperately wondered what on earth he was implying by saying the word ‘gay’.

「Return: Chapter 6」

“Are you alright? Have you calmed down?”

“.....Yes.....”

After my coughing had somewhat subsided, Shirai peered into my face, looking worried.

“I’m sorry I’ve startled you,” he said, bowing deeply.

“No.....”

As he continued to apologize, I prayed that this meant he was dismissing the recent topic of ‘gay’. Gay.....I didn’t honestly perceive myself to be gay. If someone asked me if I felt sexual interest towards the same sex, I was certain that I would immediately reply ‘no’. But what if someone asked me, what about ‘him’? If they asked me whether I felt sexual interest towards ‘him, and if they asked me whether I had any passionate feelings, either emotionally or physically towards him, then I would probably hesitate in my answer.

I was sure that I wouldn’t be able to give a definite answer, so because of this, I wanted to avoid Shirai’s question. I didn’t understand what Shirai was getting at by asking such a thing. Perhaps I acted like I was gay? Oh, but of course, maybe he himself was gay and was seeking himself a same-sex partner? As soon as the word ‘same-sex partner’ came into my head, I wondered if perhaps he thought I was a possibility. Inadvertently, I looked at Shirai.

Shirai caught my gaze, smiled, and then said, “I like you.”

“.....”

Two thoughts swirled in my mind: ‘I knew it’ and ‘that’s ridiculous’. It all made sense to me now. I now understood the reason he had cut ties with his parents. It was because he was gay. My thinking ‘that’s ridiculous’ came from the fact that there was no way a popular man like Shirai, who was considered marvelous in both his appearance and personality by everyone regardless of gender, would come to like a good-for-nothing man like me. Perhaps he was kidding? It would be more likely for him to smile and say he was joking, I thought, but Shirai’s eyes had an honest light in them.

“I like you.....but there’s no need for you to think you can’t turn me down just because I’m your boss. First, to clear things up, if I made a mistake about you being gay, you may tell me so. I won’t act differently towards you if that is the case, oh, and of course I won’t tell you to get out of the apartment either.” Shirai spoke swiftly, daring to sound cheerful.

I realized that this was because a long time had passed without me saying anything.

“Ah, um.....” I said, finally realizing this.

“Hm?”

Shirai stopped talking and looked questioningly at me, his head tilted to one side, and I was at a loss about how I should answer him. I had two choices: yes or no. Had Shirai really been serious when he had told me that he liked me? I wasn’t sure, but it seemed that his attitude and tone of voice were serious. What should I do? I panicked as Shirai waited patiently for me to speak. But even as he waited on me, I could not come up with an answer.

‘I’m sorry’ were the obvious words I should have said. But I didn’t have the courage to flatly turn down my boss’s confession. It wasn’t like I didn’t trust him when he had said that he wasn’t going to harass me if I turned him down. But I was so grateful for how much care and thought he had given me this whole time, that I felt like there was no way I could flatly reject him. That being said, I couldn’t reciprocate Shirai’s feelings. As soon as I would reciprocate, we would become lovers, but if we were to become then, naturally, we would do the things that lovers do. I couldn’t imagine myself kissing Shirai nor had I any desire to do so.

If you ‘can’ do something, then you are able accept it and do it without much protest, but when it comes to whether you ‘want’ to do it or not, then you can’t make yourself do it even if you try. That was how I felt.

Whether or not he had done everything up until now with an ulterior motive, I was still grateful to him. If I told myself to act on my gratitude and express it, I felt like I could endure it to some extent. But to endure it all the way, I myself did not wish that. Would the person who truly felt feelings of love, really desire for his partner to just ‘endure’ it? If I was Shirai and my partner did that, I would be hurt. No matter how much I thought, I couldn’t come up with an answer and my thoughts just went round and round in circles. Time passed by in silence. Then Shirai was the one who broke this unbearable silence.

“.....Do you at least not feel disgusted?”

“Yes, I.....” I was surprised and confused, but I didn’t feel ‘disgusted’. I answered honestly, but it seemed that Shirai thought that I was just being considerate and being polite.

“You can tell me if you think it’s disgusting, you know? I understand to an extent how people who hate gays feel. Because my parents were like that, you see. That’s why if you feel like that, it’s okay, I completely don’t mind.”

Although I didn't feel disgusted by his wordy explanation, I felt inconvenienced. I didn't hold any feelings of disgust towards gays. Actually, men had never come on to me before, so.....As I was thinking this, a face of one man popped into my mind.

"When I first met you...I think I fell in love."

A beautiful, pleasant, baritone voice rang in my ear.

That beauty mark by the mouth. That white transparent-like skin. Those misty, black eyes. And.....

".....Shimizu-kun?"

When he called my name a little bit louder, I came to my senses.

"I- I'm sorry. I spaced out a little....."

I quickly apologized to Shirai in front of me, and he said, "It's okay." forcing a smile.

"If you don't feel disgusted, then I wonder, can I invite you out to eat like this again?"

"....."

Shirai had a very nervous expression on his face. I hesitated about how to answer, but I realized that if I kept silent, Shirai would definitely assume I was saying 'no'. I thought that maybe it wouldn't be so bad to go out for at least a meal, but if I said it was okay to go out to eat, then I would be giving him some sort of hope and that wouldn't be good, would it? I continued to hesitate, caught between these two thoughts, but then gave in to pressure and answered him.

"Yes," I said.

"Shimizu-kun....."

A smile appeared on Shirai's stiff facial expression.

"....."

Had I made the right choice? I had only done this to avoid an unpleasant moment just now, hadn't I? For a moment, I felt regret fill my chest, but there was no going back now.

"Thank you. Really....."

I felt more and more regret at the sight of Shirai being filled with emotion.

"No, there's...there's nothing to thank me for....."

When we went out to eat, no, not only when we went out to eat, when I went out anywhere with Shirai, I had never paid for anything. Of course I had insisted on paying, but Shirai had never let me take out my wallet. If we go out to eat next time, he will probably treat me again. Somehow it felt like I was 'having cake and eating it too'. To me, Shirai was no other than a reliable boss. This would never change. I should let Shirai

know this, I thought but didn't say it. I was protecting myself. If I complicated my relationship with Shirai, it would be hard to work under him after that.

This made me seem like an awfully indecent man...actually, I was indecent...

With these thoughts, I fell into self-hatred.

If that was the case, then I should act like one.

In the end, after everything had happened, I continued talking to Shirai, who had changed the subject as if nothing had happened. We eagerly talked about the future of the project.

* * * *

Every time, after we finished eating out, Shirai escorted me to my apartment.

We took the same taxi, and he got out before me. Such was the way he escorted me. Naturally, I was sorry for this, so today, I decided to take the train home.

"No need to worry. Besides, it's not like I'm thinking of doing anything strange," Shirai said, almost trying to force me to take the taxi, but I refused, saying I was sorry, and overcame him.

"Really, it's okay."

Perhaps Shirai had caught on. He shrugged his shoulders like he had given up and looked unhappy.

"I'm sorry.....Thank you for the meal."

Today he had treated me to a meal, which was over a hundred thousand yen⁴ again. Shirai had said that he didn't have any ulterior motives, but he treated me to an expensive meal every time, escorted me to my apartment, and took me out to have fun. I received so many favors from him that it was quite too much. Because of this, I feared that it was unnatural of him to say that he didn't have any ulterior motives. I was aware that I was being rude for thinking this, but if I were a homosexual, I don't think I could do all these things for a person I 'liked' without a special reason behind it. I knew that Shirai was more of a noble man than I was; nevertheless, I couldn't help but think that it was impossible to do all of this without an ulterior motive. So since I knew that I could never satisfy this 'ulterior motive', I could not happily accept so much kindness from such a noble man.

Shirai, who was usually persistent in persuading, gave up on me when I said I would take the subway, so he also took the subway home, going in the opposite direction.

⁴ ¥ 10,000 is about \$100 U.S.D

It was very crowded inside the compartment because it was right before the last train departs, so as I got on, I wondered how my relationship with Shirai was going to be like after this. I thought I was thinking about that, but I realized that my mind was being occupied by an entirely different thought.

"I don't want you to forget."

Those black, smiling eyes.

"Your body is so lewd."

Those flexible, coiling arms and legs.

"You won't forget about me?"

He definitely existed in this world.

I used to dream sometimes, but ever since I transferred to the Kansai region, I became a light sleeper, so I used sleeping pills on a regular basis. Because of that, I had stopped dreaming.

Now, I desired to see him if only in my dreams, so today I decided I would go to bed without taking the pills. I wished to dream about him.

".....Idiot....."

I came to my senses at the sound of my own mutter and sighed. At that time...at the time I had reunited with him in Chigasaki Hospital, why hadn't I kept on searching for him? I should have pursued him. But time cannot be turned back no matter how much you wish it could, so I knew it was pointless to regret. Nevertheless, I couldn't help but regret it anyway. Perhaps because I sighed so deeply, the people around me turned to look at me with great interest.

"....."

It's nothing, I looked down, trying to let them know that, and once again, 'his' face appeared in my mind. I want to see him...this thought surged inside of me, and I noticed that my right hand was tightly clutching the part of my suit near my heart.

It has been two years since I had seen 'him'. His false name was Suzuki. I wanted to know his real name. Could I reunite with him if I went to Chigasaki again? No, that time he had been there temporarily, so even if I visited the hospital now, the probability of seeing him again was low. First of all, it was a day off, so the hospital was closed except for emergencies. I let out such a deep sigh that the people around me turned to look at me again.

That nurse! Maybe if I asked her, she would know at least his contact address? I desperately tried to remember her face and what was written on the nametag that was clipped to her chest but then caught myself and almost muttered 'idiot' again. Before the words left my mouth, I bit my lip and stopped myself. Supposing I was lucky enough to

remember her name, what on earth did I want to ask her? Please tell me the name of the doctor who had examined me one year ago on behalf of the main doctor from the Psychotherapy Department? Supposing I was to ask her that, she would just laugh, saying that she didn't remember, and that would be the end of that. Even though I was ridiculing myself on how I couldn't remember her name, I realized that my hand still grasped my lapel. My chest hurt. It hurt so much. Surely this pain would continue until the day I see 'him'. With this strong belief in mind, I breathed quietly, trying to somehow let this pain pass by, but the pain only increased, putting me at a loss.

* * * *

Shirai's attitude towards me did not change after what had happened. The project began to progress smoothly, and I even started to gradually interact more with my fellow members.

“It's surprisingly easy to talk to ya.”

The other members of the project had taken note of my being unfamiliar with Kansai dialect, but actually, they were a little drawn to my standard Japanese and had told me that when we were having our now frequent conversations about work related things.

“I thought ya were a stuck up brat!”

“.....I'm sorry.”

“What're ya apologizing for? You're *not* stuck up, eh?”

When I became used to talking, our language was no longer a barrier. I talked in standard Japanese as always and they had their Kansai dialect, but communication now went on much smoother. For starters, when we worked together, I now easily felt like I was part of the team. On top of that, when work went well, this further increased the feeling of inclusiveness in me. I completely opened up to them in less than a month, but when that happened, Shirai stopped inviting me out as often as before. It seemed that he, a leader of the project and also a boss, thought that it would not be good to favorite only me. On the other hand, this wasn't bad. Shirai began to frequently invite all the other members of the project out for drinks, and thanks to that, my interaction with the members increased more and more that it even became fun to come to work.

However, gradually everything started to change into something not smooth. The number of times Shirai invited me to go out on holidays had increased. Before, it had become a frequent pattern to go out with the staff and Shirai's friends, but perhaps he wanted to avoid any gossip that might reach his subordinates, so he started to invite me to

go out with him alone.

We went to the movies. We went for a drive.

Since it was rare that there was any work to do on weekends, the only reason to refuse would have to be my physical condition, but I hesitated to give such an excuse. I couldn't refuse his invitations by giving him such a reason, so I went out with him. We went to see movies, we went for a drive to Mount Rokko, but little by little, I started to feel uncomfortable. Shirai had feelings of love towards me. Knowing that and accepting his invitations meant that I was letting him think I was accepting his feelings, didn't it? Otherwise, I would have flatly refused his invitations, right? I should have refused from the start by saying 'I'm sorry' when he had first asked me 'Can I invite you out to eat again?'

We started going out with just the two of us. Since this was a secret from everyone, I began feeling uncomfortable. But it wasn't like there was a change or anything in the usual bold way that Shirai had always approached me. He contacted me as he had done before, but since I now knew how he felt, I couldn't help but feel guilty, because with things as they were, it was simply me taking advantage of his kindness.

Although I tried as hard as I could to not let it show on my face or in my attitude, there was now a lot of silence between us when we went out. When that happened, Shirai started to be more and more considerate, increasing the level of my discomfort.

I should not accept his invitations anymore, I decided.

I found an opportunity and decided that I would tell him that I wanted to stop going out with him like this from now on. My heart was set on that, so when Shirai invited me to go see a movie that weekend, I told him I would, but planned to tell him what I had decided after we were done watching the movie and before we went out to eat.

Shirai reserved the seats for couples, which were at the very top row in the cinema. Even though the seats were for couples, they didn't look like love chairs. They were two separate seats connected to each other. There were five of these couple seats, but because business was slow for this cinema, we were the only ones in this row. The movie was popular, but this was already the fourth week of showing, so the room was about sixty percent filled with people. I had wanted to see the movie, so I was truly enjoying the showing. But as the movie neared the end, Shirai suddenly grasped my hand and squeezed it. Inadvertently, I pulled my eyes away from the screen and looked at him.

“.....”

Shirai stared firmly at the screen, but in this dim light, I could see from the side of his face that he looked nervous.

What should I do? I thought.

I knew that I should free my hand, but I couldn't move when I realized how awkward it would be after I freed my hand.

I was aware that my hand was sweating. Nervousness was making it sweat, and I thought that could be the reason to pull my hand away.

".....I'm sorry....." I said in a tiny voice barely audible to anyone and gently tried to pull my hand away.

".....!"

Perhaps sensing that I was going to do this, Shirai grasped my hand tighter. I jumped.

".....No.....?" Shirai also asked in a voice that no one other than me could hear.

It's no if it's disgusting. It's yes if it's desirable.

In English, when someone asks you 'It's not____,is it?' you answer 'No' if you find that it isn't. You answer 'Yes', if you find that it is. In Japanese, when someone asks you 'No?' and you think it's a no, then you answer yes. If you find that it's a yes, you answer no. It's complicated.

I realized my thoughts were straying, but I accidentally started thinking about that. Then Shirai asked me again, "No?" forcing me to answer.

".....I'm worried.....about the sweat."

This wasn't a lie at all. Even I would hesitate if someone told me, 'Here take my sweaty hand.' I thought that surely, Shirai would understand, but his reaction exceeded my expectations.

"Don't worry."

He grasped my hand ever so tightly, and I was at a loss, thinking, what on earth should I do? I thought maybe I should insist that it bothered me, but the movie was still playing, so it would be bad to say too much. In the end, I left my right hand in Shirai's until the movie was over. Shirai finally let go of my hand when the end credits began to roll probably because the lights were going to be turned on soon.

".....Sorry....." he muttered.

I assumed that the reason he was apologizing was because he understood that I didn't agree to us holding hands.

".....Um....."

It wasn't like I calculated to take advantage of this opportunity, but if I was going to tell him, now was the time to do it. I opened my mouth to speak, ".....I'm sorry. I only see you as a respectable boss, Mr. Shirai."

No one was around us but I was still worried, so not only did I speak in a tiny voice, I also spoke quickly.

“.....”

Had Shirai understood what I was trying to say or maybe he hadn't heard me? I couldn't tell from his blank expression. Before long, the end credits ended and the lights suddenly came on inside the room.

“Let's talk a little,” Shirai said, smiling.

“.....Okay.....”

His smile was stiff. I assumed that he had heard me, and I followed him. He led me to a small, high-class sushi house. I was nervous about how much it could cost.

Then he said to me, “We can talk here without worrying about being seen.”

He told me there was no need to worry and suggested some drinks.

“Um.....I.....”

I thought he had understood that I couldn't accept his feelings, and yet, he still brought me here to this expensive-looking restaurant. I decided I would try telling him this again before the food arrived. If I could do that, then I could leave this restaurant immediately. Deciding that, I was just about to open my mouth to speak, but Shirai spoke before me.

“Shizimu-kun, is there someone you like?”

“Eh?”

I was left speechless from this sudden question. Was this how he had interpreted my silence? Shirai spoke again, “There's someone else you like...right?”

It seemed that he had not figured it out. I shook my head no as he started to pile on his questions.

“No.....That's not it.....”

“But you can't accept my feelings. That's it, right?”

“.....I'm sorry.....”

I bowed deeply in front of Shirai who had a wry smile on his face.

“There's no need to apologize. There's no rule that says you must fall in love with the person who falls in love with you.”

“But, like this.....” I still feel sorry, I was about to say, but Shirai continued, talking over me.

“I don't mind. I would be happy if you do fall in love with me, but it's okay even if you're not in love with me. I really enjoy spending time with you. So if you'd like, I want us to eat out and go out for fun in the future. I'll never touch you again.”

“.....”

“I can't” I should have said. Logically, I knew that, but I just couldn't say it.

“Then let's eat. Can you let your good old boss decide?” Shirai said cheerfully

and began to smile.

“.....I’m truly.....” Sorry, I bowed deeply and heard Shirai’s very kind voice in my ear.

“There’s no need to apologize. Please don’t make me say the same thing again. Please.”

“.....”

What should I do? I was at a loss, unable to come up in the slightest with a reply. Once again, I thought myself a coward who had chosen the road of escape. I didn’t have the power to foresee into the future, so I didn’t know what would happen from here on out. In the end, not only had Shirai treated me, he had even escorted me by taxi to my apartment that day.

「Return: Chapter 7」

I was dreaming.

Ah...this is a dream, I realized. It was rare for me to dream. But with that realization, I was now sure that I was inside a dream world.

“Hey.”

He – Suzuki – approached me, smiling. We were inside that room I had memorized by heart. It was the room in his villa at Karuizawa in which I had been imprisoned. There were metal bars on the window glass so that I couldn’t run away. When I realized that I had no other way but to stay here, I was filled with intense happiness.

“You seem happy,” Suzuki said perhaps because it had shown on my face. Then walked up to the bed on which I was and sat down beside me.

“I am happy.”

I thought I didn’t say this clearly to Suzuki.

Convincing myself that I could be clear precisely because this was a dream, I continued speaking.

“I wanted to see you for so long. Why hadn’t I confirmed your name? Why did I think that I’d be satisfied just by knowing that you existed in this world?”

“We don’t need words in this world.”

The moment Suzuki said that, he slowly pushed me down on the bed.

“Then what do we need in this world?” My voice cooed.

“You know.”

Suzuki chuckled and pressed his lips to mine.

“Mmm.....!”

It had been a while since I had tasted his lips. Tears almost spilled from my eyes upon such a gentle, moist, and soft sensation. His tongue broke through my two rows of teeth, desiring my tongue and exploring the inside of my mouth. I got turned on with just that and wrapped my legs and arms tightly around him, pulling him closer.

“You’re impatient,” he interrupted our kiss, chuckling at me. I felt embarrassed, but I was aggressive, because I knew this was inside a dream.

“‘Cause I want it.”

“Alright, I’ll give it to you soon.” So wait, he said and got up. Before I knew it, we were nude, and inadvertently, I laughed, thinking that dreams are convenient.

He asked me, *“What’s so funny?”*

"It's 'cause....." I started to say that I think dreams are convenient, but if I said the word dream I would probably wake up, so getting scared, I quickly closed my mouth.

"You're strange," he chuckled and then carried his fingers to his mouth. He slowly sucked his index finger as he stared down at me. From this viscous gaze, from those red lips licking those fingers, a shiver ran up my spine, and I couldn't stand it anymore.

"Hurry.....!"

I stretched out my arms, trying to bring him close.

"If I don't prepare you, it will hurt." He shook his head no, perhaps meaning to tease me or perhaps truly meaning to be kind.

"That's fine.....!"

I wanted him to hurry. In front of my eyes, was his thick cock with shining black hair. Ah...I missed it. Being pierced by that cock. How long had it been since I had come to know of that utmost joy?

Hurry, hurry. My feelings intensifying, I lay there with my legs spread wide open in an inviting pose.

"You're a naughty boy, aren't you?" he said as he inserted his wet fingers inside me, perhaps finally turned on himself.

"Ngh.....!"

It had been a very long time since I allowed anything to go in there. But because dreams are convenient, it didn't feel uncomfortable at all, and his finger didn't just go in, it went in deep. My soft insides began to twitch.

"You're very lewd, aren't you?"

"No.....!"

I pouted in that cooing voice from before, because he was being mean. I thought I was overdoing it, but it seemed that he liked it.

"See how lewd you are? When I say 'lewd' you get tighter."

"Enou.....enough.....!"

The teasing, the fingering, I wanted it to stop already. There is something I want more, I tried to show him with words and through my actions.

"Put it in.....!" I urged, grabbed the fleshy part near my anus and spread it open. You'll put in something bigger than a finger, right?

Hurry, hurry, please put it in.

".....Alright....." He smiled and nodded, narrowing his beautiful black eyes.

".....I'm happy.....!"

I couldn't help being excited.



Hurry then, I said, thrusting out my hips as I continued to lie there as before. Then he took out his fingers from there and instead pressed the tip of the thing I craved – that thick cock.

“Aah.....!”

The moment it touched me, I felt it’s heat, and my soft walls contracted violently. Naturally, I twisted my hips.

“Remove your hands.”

I can’t come in like this, he gave a lopsided smile, and I removed my hands from my buttocks.

“I’m coming in.”

At the same time he said that, he inserted the tip of his cock all the way inside.

“Aah.....!”

I was tired of waiting for this feeling. His cock went inside, aiming deeper, as he pried open my soft insides. Finally his legs connected with mine. His cock went in so deep I felt my intestines rise. For some reason, I was about to cry.

“Why are you crying?” He asked wonderingly, perhaps because I had winced.

“I’m happy.....”

Even though this was a dream, I was happy that we could hold each other again. Yes. I had certainly felt that way back then too.

The next moment, my own voice echoed inside my head.

“Are you really happy? This is just a dream, you know? No one will be in your arms when you wake up. Are you really satisfied with that?”

I am satisfied, because I can’t see him in reality anyway. I desire to see him if only in my dreams. What’s so bad about that?

I was about to yell at my own voice, but my vision became distorted.

“.....Wait.....!”

I was waking up. I don’t want that, I thought as I tightly hugged Suzuki with my arms and legs. He was going to start fucking me. I didn’t want to wake up now! At least let us come together, I thought, holding onto him with all my might.

“I can’t move if you hold on to me so tightly, you know.”

Suzuki’s taunting voice was gradually fading.

“Wait.....! Don’t go.....!”

I certainly realized that his presence in my arms was quickly fading away.

“No! Wait!”

I desperately yelled, but there was no sign of him anymore. I didn’t want to accept

that he was ‘gone’ already and kept my eyes tightly closed.

“No! No! NOOO!”

I violently shook my head no and waved my arms around in midair. Until just a moment ago, Suzuki had been here, naked, in my arms. I was full of regret. I was sad. I cried and screamed in my dream.

“NOOO!”

As I blindly waved my arms around, I awoke with a start.

* * * *

“.....A dream.....”

I woke up sad.

My face buried in the pillow, I realized that it wasn’t the one I always slept on.

“.....Eh.....?” I quickly sat up and looked around. I was in an unfamiliar, dim room. As I squinted, I understood where I was. *“.....The.....hospital room.....”*

This was definitely the room at the Chigasaki Hospital in which I had spent only one day last year. What was going on? As my head spun with confusion, the door opened with a click.

“You awake?”

“Ah.....”

Slipping through the door into the room was Suzuki. I thought I had awoken from my dream, but it seemed that I was still in the dream world. It’s unusual to have double dreams. I didn’t think that I had such a skill. I must not wake up this time. I thought and stretched out my arms towards Suzuki.

“I want you to hold me. Right now.”

“Fufu. You’re so aggressive.”

Suzuki was wearing a white lab coat like he had been wearing that time. Wasn’t he wearing a black turtleneck and black pants in my dream just now? I was about to remember, but stopped myself, thinking that I shouldn’t. If I realized that this was a dream, I would probably wake up again. I will not lose this time, I told myself and urged him, still being just as impatient as before.

“Hold me.....I didn’t let anyone do it since then. You can check,” I said and started to undress. Hadn’t I become naked in a blink of an eye just a while ago? I was about to remember the dream I had just now again, but dismissed that thought, thinking I mustn’t.

“Mhmm, let me check whether or not you’ve been swallowing other men’s

dicks.”

“Dick.....!?”

Had he ever said such vulgar words before? I wondered for a second, but immediately remembered that there was a time he had said such words when he had tried to excite me.

Ah...I miss it. I want to be teased by even more embarrassing words.

That plea turned into words, which spilled out of my mouth.

“I didn’t let anyone touch me. I didn’t even do it by myself. ‘Cause the only thing I want in there is your dick.”

“Fufu. This, right?”

His white lab coat undone, he lowered the zipper on his slacks and showed me that thing I craved.

“Aah.....!”

I want it. I fell to my knees right in front of him. When I wrapped my mouth around his protruding cock, a raw smell spread throughout my mouth. I longed for this bitter taste that stung my tongue. Bliss filled my chest as I wholeheartedly sucked his cock, which had turned so big that it wouldn’t go in all the way into my mouth. I slurped off the pre-cum and licked that hot rod over and over. His thick, vein filled cock. I held it in my hands with affection and wrapped my mouth around the tip again. Then Suzuki’s husky voice came down on me from above.

“Got good at giving blow jobs, didn’t you? Are you practicing with someone?”

“.....!”

The moment I looked up, letting him know I wouldn’t do that, Suzuki smiled.

“I’ll have to punish you for that, won’t I?”

“Ah.....!”

My heart skipped a beat from those words, and my already erect cock pulsed heavily.

“Please.....do it.....”

Punish me. Sprawled out on the bed, I held my legs open in my hands. Suzuki chuckled, looking down at my exposed genitals.

“You mean to tell me you didn’t do it with anyone even though you’re twitching so much?”

“I didn’t.....!” Really! I said but felt a perverse twitching down there just as he had said.

“Then let’s start your punishment,” Suzuki said dreamily and fell on top of me.

“Do it.....Please do it.....!”

I want you to hurry. I thrust out my hips with longing.

“See,” he lightly slapped my buttocks. “You’re twitching more and more. What a lewd body.”

“I’m sorry I’m so lewd.....” I meekly apologized, but it simply resulted in me becoming more excited. My own words made me boil with lust more and more, and even though he didn’t touch me at all, I felt so excited that I thought I would come already.

“Please give this lewd body your...”

“Dick?” Suzuki chuckled and showed his saliva-covered cock.

I want it, I nodded and thrust out my hips again.

“I have no choice,” he gave a crooked smile and pressed the tip of his cock in there. “You’re eating me.” Just as he had pointed out, my soft insides were holding onto his cock and violently twitching around it.

“No.....!” I only now felt embarrassed. As I held my legs open to both sides, he put his hands over my hands and pushed, raising my hips up off the bed. “Hurts.....”

Inadvertently, I let out a moan, because it was a difficult pose to hold.

“That’s ‘cause this is your punishment.” But the next moment, sweet words slipped out of Suzuki’s mouth, and I fell into ecstasy. “I’m coming in.”

At the same time he said that, he inserted his cock. Suddenly, I had a sense of deja-vu and realized that this was the same situation that had happened in my recent previous dream. Suzuki’s face quickly started to turn blurry in front of my eyes.

“Wait.....!”

Oh no. I shouldn’t have remembered, I thought, but it was too late. His powerful arms that had supported this difficult pose were no longer here, and when I waved my hands, he himself was fading away.

“Wait! Don’t go!” My yelling also gave me deja-vu.

Ah...I’m waking up, I thought and couldn’t help feeling sad. Tears spilled from my eyes.

“Wait.....!”

At least hold my hand in the end, I thought, and even though I stretched out my right hand very far, I awoke with a start.

“.....”

I sat up, looked around and saw that I was in my own room at my apartment. There are no such things as triple dreams, I thought, smiling wryly. At the same time I buried my face in my hands, tears welled up in my eyes.



I want to see you.....I want to see you so much!

If only in my dreams, I thought, closing my eyes and trying to fall asleep, but the uncontrollable sobbing welling up inside me prevented that.

“Ughu.....!.....Ughu.....!”

If the only place I could see him was in the dream world, I wouldn’t mind ever waking up again, was the thought I couldn’t hold back.

Lack of sleep will hinder my work.

The project is at its climax.

Failure would not be forgiven, so I must sleep.

I was trying to force myself to think the obvious thoughts a working adult would think, but my tears just wouldn’t stop.

I couldn’t even hold him in my dreams!

I sat there, my feelings of wanting to see him again growing stronger and continued crying until the night grew pale.

* * * *

The next morning, I looked in the mirror and became depressed, because it seemed that people would notice at first glance that I had been crying due to how extremely swollen my eyes were. I decided to hide this fact by wearing glasses and began to get ready, but felt dizzy, perhaps because I hadn’t slept much. When I arrived at the office, I drank some coffee hoping that would wake me up.

“Glasses? That’s new.”

My coworker spoke to me.

“I don’t have my contacts in,” I lied.

“You wanted to look intelligent, didn’t ya?” he teased, and I dismissed it with a smile. But even though I had deceived my coworkers, I couldn’t avoid Shirai.

“Do you have a minute?” He called me, and I went to see him.

“What’s wrong? You don’t look good. Have you been crying?”

“No, I wasn’t crying. I just didn’t get enough sleep.....”

“Didn’t get enough sleep? Is something troubling you?”

“No, that’s not it.....”

“.....Is it because of what happened last night?” Shirai asked nervously. The dream had left such a big impression on me that only when he said this did I remember what had happened last night; that he had held my hand and I had rejected him.

“No.” I answer honestly, but perhaps Shirai thought I was just being considerate,

so he was quite persistent in questioning me.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes. Really, it’s nothing.”

This went on for several minutes until finally Shirai said, “That’s good then.”

But it seemed that he still didn’t believe me. Nevertheless, he reluctantly stopped pursuing the question further and sent me back to work, because I guess he feared that he was putting me into a difficult situation by questioning me.

That day, I made a terrible mistake, even though I had been so insistent that ‘nothing’ was bothering me. I deleted the data that had been constructed up until now.

“Ah!” I turned pale when I realized what I had done. I looked around.

“What’s the matta?”

“Shimizu?”

All the project members came gathering towards me, probably because I had such a miserable look on my face.

“.....Um.....” I was scared to speak, but I had to. My voice was hoarse, and my lips quivered. Nevertheless, when I managed to report that I had deleted the data, the place was in an uproar.

“Be more reliable, eh!?” One of the coworkers yelled at me, his face changing color.

“I- I’m sorr.....!”

“I presume we got a backup, eh? How much is on there.....?”

“Everythin’ we’ve worked on up till yesterday is on the server, ain’t it?”

After that, all the members ran about leaving me to myself. It wasn’t until dusk that it was confirmed that we somehow managed to lose only today’s amount of work.

“I’m really sorry.”

I apologized to every single person, getting down on my hands and knees. They were all sighing with relief.

“Anyone can make a mistake, eh?”

Don’t worry, they said these kind words to me, but I could tell from their facial expressions that they would not trust me from now on. I knew perfectly well that it had been my fault, but I still couldn’t stop feeling depressed. I myself had destroyed my relationships at work, which I had worked so hard to build. I wondered how much time it would take to restore the lost trust. From now on, it would definitely be awkward to talk to everyone. I sat there with this sinking feeling in my chest, but I knew that letting it show would be childish, so I pretended as hard as I could to be calm and passed time this way until the end of the work day. We needed to catch up on the work we had lost

because of me, so I planned to stay late to finish it that day, but it wasn't like I was told to do this. However, Shirai invited me, as well as everyone on the team, out for drinks.

"I have work to do....."

"It's fine. It will be my treat tonight, so let's go."

I refused, but Shirai insisted, so I ended up going with him to the nearby yakiniku shop along with my team members, who still had ill feeling towards me.

"Boss, ya really treatin' us tonight?"

"Yeah. Everyone worked hard today." So drink up, Shirai said, encouraging everyone to get drinks and then ordered everyone meat.

"You eat too," Shirai urged me, when I hesitated, not reaching for my chopsticks.

"Ah, okay."

"Eh? Are ya not feeling well? Or are ya still worried about makin' that mistake, 'cause it'll affect tomorrow's work? It'll be forgotten soon enough, eh?" My senior on the team, who thought I was still troubled, said to me and encouraged me to drink.

"Yea' yea'. I made worse mistakes before."

"Ah...ya were like a ghost that time. Shimizu's mistake was nothin' compared to yours."

"Now you're just cryin' drunk."

Probably because of the power of alcohol, everybody talked openly to each other. That was how it felt like.

"Ya won't make a mistake again, eh? If we work on this important project as a team, we can do it, so don't try to do it alone. Let's all work together, ai'ght?"

".....Thank you."

Hearing these kind words somehow brought me to tears.

"Hey, I wanted to say that! I'm the leader after all." Shirai said sounding disappointed, and the place burst out with excitement.

"Oh, you ain't got that much authority, boss!"

"Yea', yea'! Let the boss take away all these nice things from ya."

"The boss is payin' for you, ya know."

"And naturally, the cost bites, eh?"

With the pleasant atmosphere of everyone talking in unison, the drinking party ended, but the party still continued as we all went to karaoke. Pretty soon, it was the hour just before the last train, so we wrapped it up. By then, everyone's feelings of remorse for their own past mistakes and everyone's ill feelings towards me had completely disappeared. As we exchanged see-you-tomorrow's in cheerful voices, we parted at the train station.

“I’ll take you home,” Shirai, standing nearby me, said, because he and I lived in the opposite directions.

“Thank you.....very much.”

If Shirai hadn’t invited everyone and me out for drinks tonight, then my relationship with everyone definitely would still have been in the gutter. I deeply bowed to Shirai, who had made that disappear.

“Strike while the iron is hot, as they say. I think it’s best to openly talk it over and do it as soon as possible, if it seems like there are still ill feelings remaining.” Shirai smiled as if it were nothing and patted my shoulder making me look up. “The due date is approaching soon, and everyone is tense. Everyone is sorry that they took it out on you. They actually regret it, you know. I was just the envoy.”

“.....Thank you.....very much.....I’m really sorry.....”

Don’t worry. It’s not a big deal. The more he emphasized that, the more sorry I felt, so I bowed my head more deeply and tried to let him know how thankful and sorry I was.

“I said that’s enough already.” You’re so persistent! Shirai said jokingly, and then right the next moment, grabbed my arm.

“.....Um.....” I looked up, surprised by how strong his grip on me was.

“If you feel sorry, then how about you spend a little time with me?” Shirai grinned and peered into my face.

“Ah, okay.....” My heart pounded, because I had a bad feeling about this. I wondered nervously where he was taking me tonight as I began walking down the shopping street after Shirai.

* * * *

It was something unexpected, but the place that Shirai took me was a kissaten that stayed open past midnight. The place was quite occupied, but everyone was absorbed in their own conversations, so it didn’t feel like they paid any attention to their surroundings. Shirai chose our seats in a secluded area and then handed me the menu.

“Let’s sober up. I think I’ll have a blended coffee.”

“Ah, then I’ll have one too.....” After I told my order to the waiter, I decided I actually wanted to drink something cold. “Ah, I’m sorry. I’ll actually have an iced coffee.”

I revised and then Shirai said, “I’ll have an iced coffee too,” also changing his order. Neither Shirai nor I uttered a word until the iced coffees we had ordered quickly

arrived. When the waiter bowed to us and left, Shirai finally spoke as he stuck a straw into the iced coffee.

“Say, Shimizu-kun. There’s something troubling you, isn’t there?”

“.....No.....” As I shook my head, I immediately realized what Shirai was getting at and raised my eyes. “I said no, you know? It has nothing to do with last night.”

I felt that Shirai was feeling unnecessarily responsible. When I thought about what he had done for me today, I felt very sorry that I had dragged him down into such a situation, so now I desperately tried to correct his misunderstanding.

“Really. It has nothing to do with yesterday. Besides, there’s nothing bothering me in the first place. Yesterday, for some reason, I woke up from a bad dream and couldn’t sleep after that.....”

A bad dream.....more like a ‘good’ dream, but it would be contradictory to say you couldn’t sleep after having a ‘good dream’.

Honestly, I should have wanted to confide in him, yet I had told him a white lie. I felt bad about this.

“So,” I continued to speak, “Like I said many times, nothing is really bothering.....”

“You’re not just being considerate towards me?”

Shirai wanted to make sure of this, because it seemed that he still doubted me.

“Yes. I’m not. I’m positive about this.”

I made myself firm and Shirai gazed at me for a moment before speaking, looking a little hesitant.

“Shimizu-kun.....You don’t have to tell me if you don’t want to, but you paid a visit to the Psychotherapy Department before, didn’t you?”

“Ah, yes.”

Shirai had never brought this up to me until now, but I thought that he had heard about it from someone, so I wasn’t shocked. However, the moment I heard Shirai’s next words, I was so taken aback that I froze on the spot.

“The reason being is that you went missing for ten days.....During that time, you had some kind of intoxicating experience, and even now, you’re still having side-effects.....Perhaps that was the reason you went there?”

“.....N- no.....”

‘Intoxicating experience’ – maybe by some people, that experience could be called ‘intoxicating’, but it could just as well be called a ‘criminal offense’ by everyone else. To me, however, it was neither a ‘crime’ nor ‘intoxication’. It was simply a dear event. Before I knew it, I had spaced out thinking about this, so then, “Shimizu-kun?”

Shirai called my name and brought me back to my senses.

“Ah, I’m sorry. It has nothing to do with that time.....”

“You mean to say you don’t remember much of what had happened during those ten days?”

I had tried to change the subject, but apparently, it seemed that Shirai held an interest in my disappearance and wanted to know the details.

“Yes. For the most part.....”

“Were you kidnapped?”

“No, not kidnapped, more like.....”

I realized I should have just said that I completely didn’t remember, but it was too late.

“Anything is fine. Won’t you tell me anything that you can remember?” I want to be your support, Shirai encouraged me, so I had no choice but to utter something and unwillingly began to say what seemed like harmless things.

“I don’t remember much, because I felt like I was in a dream, but I was probably hypnotized or something.....”

“Hypnotized?”

I regretted my word choice again. Shirai began to ask me question after question, his eyes shining with great interest.

“Where did it happen?”

“Probably the train station.”

“By whom?”

“A young man. He claimed to be my elementary school classmate, but I found out later that this was actually not true.....”

“How did you find out?”

“That, I.....”

When I was in elementary school, a transfer student suddenly disappeared while I had been absent due to rubella and nobody had remembered him. He said that he kidnapped me, because I remembered him. After that, however, it occurred to me that I got rubella when I was already a working adult, not when I was an elementary school student. He had claimed to be ‘Suzuki’, but I remembered how the real Suzuki looked. It was completely a mystery even now as to who *that* ‘Suzuki’ was. I answered Shirai’s questions and told him the events as they had happened, but obviously, I didn’t tell him the ‘fact’ that I had been imprisoned at a villa in Karuizawa and had been repeatedly raped.

“I completely don’t remember what happened at the villa.” I avoided the subject

with a 'I don't remember' anything that happened during those ten empty days. ".....So that's how it is....." I shrugged my shoulders and wrapped up my story by saying that after the ten days, 'Suzuki' finally took me to the station we had first met in Tokyo and then I never saw him again after that. At the bottom of my heart, I knew I had lied again in the end. Shirai seemed to be deeply interested in my story, because he appeared to be thinking hard about something for a while, but then...

"I heard a similar story before," he said suddenly, astonishing me.

".....Really.....?"

What did that mean.....?

Did that mean 'Suzuki' had kidnapped and imprisoned someone else besides me before?

That was the first thought that came to my head.

"I read something exactly like this before. I recall reading a gossip article about a small incident using hypnosis. It happened around a hundred years ago in London.....no, Paris, I believe." I'm certain it was Europe, he said smiling, a little embarrassed, and then continued speaking. "A psychiatrist fell in love with a young woman whom he frequently saw on a street corner. The woman was completely unaware of the doctor, but one day, there came a chance to talk to her, so the doctor took advantage of this opportunity and put hypnosis on her. He had her believe that he was an alien, and therefore, he imprisoned her. The woman was terrified of him, firmly believing that he was an alien, and spent around one month imprisoned. Naturally, he tied her up when they had sexual relations. During the day and during the night, he had his way with her an innumerable amount of times.....however, the women's family had filed a missing persons report with the police, so eventually her whereabouts were discovered, and the psychiatrist was arrested. After that, it took three years for the women's hypnosis to dissipate, but even after she recovered from it, it said in the article that she didn't bear a grudge against the psychiatrist. Perhaps because the hypnosis hadn't completely worn off....."

".....That.....happened a hundred years ago.....?"

Even I could tell that my voice sounded hoarse when I asked.

"Yeah. That's right." Shirai nodded, smiling but then suddenly looked worried and peered into my face.

"Are you alright? You look pale, you know?"

".....I'm alright....."

I nodded, aware that my answer did not sound convincing at all.

"Perhaps you've experienced something similar to this?"

"....."

Should I nod and agree with the question, or should I deny it? I hesitated, not answering right away.

“It was similar, wasn’t it?”

It seemed this was how Shirai had interpreted my silence. He looked like he wanted to say something else after but appeared to have changed his mind, smiled instead, and then, “If your sleepless nights continue, I want you to consult with me about them,” he said with a sincere look in his eyes and nodded.

“Alright.”

It would be a problem for him if I made a mistake again due to lack of sleep.

I had given him that answer, because I believed that otherwise it was going to be a problem for him and then I heard Shirai’s voice that sounded a little like he was brooding over something.

“I want to be your support.”

“.....Tha.....thank you.”

I want to be your support even if it’s beyond work. It seemed like Shirai was being insistent on this. All I could do was thank him and deeply bow, but at that time, I still had not realized that this was the same as accepting his feelings.

「Return: Chapter 8」

The project progressed smoothly and before I knew it, it was completed. As usual, Shirai kept an eye on me and invited me out often on our days off from work. However, just as he had stated before, he never again touched me since that time he had grasped my hand at the movie theater.

“I’m happy to just spend time with you.”

I wasn’t as childish as to take his word for it, but even then, I still couldn’t help but continue going out with him, because I knew that Shirai had given me a salary reduction ever since I had committed the mistake that day. He had cut my salary, because it seemed that it had cost quite a lot to restore the system. This, I had found out from a project team member.

“Really, he’s a capable man,” deserving of no complaints, he said with admiration, but when he found out I felt responsible he looked openly flustered. “I’m sorry, I don’t blame ya at all, Shimizu. I’m just sayin’ the boss is a really good guy……”

“I know, but I think it’s natural that I’m to blame,” when I said that, he looked more and more sorry.

“I’m sorry. I really am. But I think the fact that the boss didn’t say anything to ya about it, means he doesn’t want ya to feel responsible, ya know?”

He backed him up, and I thanked him, feeling more sorry than ever. I decided to visit with Shirai after work.

“I’m happy you called me out,” Shirai said just as happily as he had been when he had accepted my invitation to go to the kissaten, but when I mentioned my salary reduction……

“Oh,” he said and shrugged his shoulders, looking openly disappointed.

“You can gain back the money in no time. It’s nothing to worry about.”

“But……” I can’t help being worried, I argued.

However, he gave a lopsided smile and said, “I know how you feel, but I really don’t want you to be worried about it. It’s nothing personal. I would give a salary reduction to any of my subordinates who make a mistake, no matter who they are, but I would never hold it against them.” So don’t worry, Shirai said, smiling, but of course, I couldn’t say, ‘I see,’ and give him my consent. “There’s no need to feel guilty.” The more Shirai talked, the more I understood that he was being honest, but it still bothered me. Was there any way to repay him? Without even thinking, I knew the answer. But I didn’t have the willpower to do it. Honestly, I didn’t know what to do. I didn’t dislike

Shirai at all. I respected him and liked his character. However, I didn't have any 'romantic' feelings towards him. I had clearly realized that when Shirai had grasped my hand at the movie theater. I hadn't felt disgusted, but I had been at a loss of what to do.

It had felt overly wrong to hold Shirai's hands. I couldn't imagine kissing him. And what would come after that was even more unthinkable. But it seemed that Shirai definitely desired to hold hands with me, kiss me, and have sex with me. I couldn't accept those feelings. I had made that clear to him, hadn't I?

He always took control over our conversations, so it seemed that he still hadn't clearly understood that I had rejected him. Before I could tell him exactly how I feel about him, Shirai always interrupted me and would not let me finish.

Here I go, blaming someone else, I thought, disgusted with myself.

Even though he interrupts me when I try to tell him that I reject him, I should say 'no' and stop him from talking if I truly want to refuse him. I have caused him nothing but trouble at work and when we were alone out of work, but he had always done so much for me that words couldn't even describe it. On top of that, he got a salary reduction as well because of me. Perhaps the reason he had stressed 'it's nothing to worry about' was because he still thought he was responsible that I had committed the mistake that day. That's what it seemed like to me, and I felt more and more at a loss of what to do.

As we talked, Shirai invited me to go out golfing on the weekend. A golf tournament within the company was coming up, and Shirai knew I was a beginner, so he suggested we practice on the weekend. Actually, I wanted to practice but hesitated in accepting his invitation for a moment, wondering why out of all the other beginners Shirai was only inviting me.

But Shirai said, "I don't have any ulterior motives. We won't be staying the night, since I'll take you back to your place by dusk," so I couldn't refuse. Shirai was good at teaching, so I could play golf for the first time in my life and think it was fun. "You have a natural talent for it, so you'll become good in no time," Shirai praised me.

After we played and had a light meal at the golf club, he was taking me back to my home just as he said he would. The previous day, I had worked overtime and had stayed at the office until quite late, so I was desperately trying to fight off fatigue as we drove back to my home. I didn't have a car, so Shirai had been driving me around in his.

I obviously couldn't fall asleep while having my boss drive me around.

I thought I was holding out, but before I knew it, I had fallen asleep.

When I awoke with a start, I saw that we were driving through the neighborhood where Shirai lived.

“I- I’m sorry……!” I quickly apologized, wondering, just how long had I been asleep?

“No, you must be tired, right? It’s nothing to worry about,” Shirai laughed.

“Yes,” I said, remembering something.

“If you’d like, you can come inside? We could have dinner, but I only have pre-made food.”

“No…that’s okay…….”

I declined, but Shirai insisted, “I know it’s not the best, but it would be troublesome to prepare dinner now, wouldn’t it?”

It seemed shameful to refuse now. I owed him one for falling asleep on our way back, so I ended up accepting Shirai’s invitation. He had said that he only had ‘pre-made food’, but various dishes he had purchased from the mall lay on top of the table. It seemed as if he had expected that he would invite me in, that’s why he had bought them.

“I know I didn’t take you to your home, but won’t you have a glass of wine?” he asked mischievously, offering me the wine. I wasn’t an expert in wine, but I recognized the label. It was the wine I had referred to as ‘delicious’ some time ago at the restaurant. I had taken an extraordinary liking to its refreshing taste. It seemed that Shirai had remembered me saying that.

“…….”

I really don’t know what to do anymore, I muttered to myself again as Shirai delightfully talked about various things. He talked energetically about how delicious the meal was and about golf. Shirai was really enjoying himself, and I felt like he drank faster than usual.

It’s not like I was being lured into this, but I also drank too much. By the time I realized this, we had already emptied the second bottle of wine.

“I’m glad we have a day off tomorrow.”

As I said this, Shirai uncorked a third bottle and said, let’s drink a little more, because the sports news was about to start. We then migrated from the dining room table to the living room. We sat down next to each other and watched the large screen TV together.

“This is kind of nice, isn’t it?”

Shirai murmured, gazing at me, perhaps considerably drunk.

“…….”

His misty eyes told one thing ‘I like you.’

I couldn’t reply nor look away, precisely because I knew that. I just gazed back at Shirai.

“Can I.....break my promise?” Shirai asked nervously, reaching for my knee.

My hand was resting on my knee.

“.....”

When I didn’t answer him, Shirai hesitated a little and then grasped my hand. I almost jumped but controlled myself. It seemed that Shirai took this as me accepting him. I felt his grip on my hand become stronger. If I was going to shake him off, now was the time. If I kept my hand in his any longer, he would misunderstand my feelings more and more.

He’ll misunderstand.....he’ll misunderstand, right? I asked myself.

If I didn’t shake off his hand, Shirai would think that I was accepting his feelings, but would that really be a ‘misunderstanding’?

Up until now, he had done many favors for me.

Up until now, he had shown me sympathy and had never forced me to do anything.

Then it was about time that I should accept his feelings, right?

I thought that using the word ‘should’ was proof that I was forcing myself. But forcing myself to accept Shirai’s feelings didn’t seem like the right choice to me. That is what I believed.

Surely, I will never see him again – that man who had called himself ‘Suzuki’. It was very rude to say that Shirai was his replacement, but perhaps it was necessary to throw away my feelings of longing for Suzuki now, since I would never see him again. On the other hand, Shirai had sacrificed so much for me, but whether or not treasuring his existence was the right path to take was not something to decide on a whim. Nevertheless, I felt like I should rejoice that there was someone who was okay with me, that there was someone who wanted a useless, having-nothing-but-faults person like me.

That ‘should’ again, I sighed as the word popped into my head and then Shirai firmly grasped my hand so that I now could clearly feel his strong grip.

“.....If.....if you can’t accept my feelings, then pull your hand away. Don’t hold back,” Shirai said hoarsely, still passionately gazing at me.

“.....Um.....”

If I didn’t pull away, he would think I was accepting, right?

He had been very clear with his words, so now I was at a loss of what to do.....

Then, I made up my mind.

“Shimizu-kun.....!”

I can’t believe it – was what Shirai’s voice and facial expression read. The reason for this was because the action I had taken surprised him immensely. I hadn’t pulled

away. I had willingly chosen to return his grasp in the end.

“Is this okay?” Shirai asked in a hollow voice and peered into my eyes.

“.....Yes.....” I only said one word, but I sounded terribly hoarse.

“.....Thank you.....” He thanked me in a choking voice befitting his facial expression, and I returned his grasp, squeezing his hand harder but then he suddenly pulled his hand away.

“Ah.....!”

He pulled me to his chest, and I inadvertently exclaimed, because I almost spilled my wine.

“Sorry,” Shirai said, took the wine glass out of my hand, put it on the table, and embraced me again. My heartbeat echoed inside my head like a ringing in my ears. Is this really okay? I asked myself over the loud noise that brought on a headache.

I couldn’t decide whether or not this was okay.

But right now, I had made up my mind that it was ‘okay’.

Right now, I didn’t feel anything beyond indebtedness to Shirai, but maybe some kind of new feelings would develop if we start dating.

I hope that happens...yes, that would be nice, I nodded to myself as Shirai tightly embraced me for a while but then finally removed his arms from my back and pulled himself a little away from me.

“Shimizu-kun.” He touched my cheek with his fingertips and slightly lifted up my chin.

A kiss? I guessed, closing my eyes and then heard a loud gulp.

“Sorry.” I immediately heard Shirai say, sounding a little embarrassed. I casually opened my eyes. “I’m getting greedy, aren’t I?” Shirai started to smile, holding my gaze.

“No.....” I replied. At that moment, Shirai’s cellphone ringtone began playing.

“.....Who is it?”

I wondered, but he said, “Doesn’t matter”, trying to ignore it.

“It’s okay with me. Please answer it,” I told him probably somewhere in my mind wanting to forestall the kiss for as long as possible.

I had willingly made up my mind to do this, so forestalling to do this could only be called being a ‘coward,’ I thought. But then I made up a convenient excuse in my head that actually, if this was an important phone call from work that could not be missed and he didn’t answer it, it would be a problem.

“Really?” Shirai said, looking disappointed and took out his cellphone from his pocket. However, he immediately looked surprised. “Excuse me,” he told me, excusing himself and answered it. “Hello?” He headed outside the living room as he talked.

“.....?”

It's an important phone call after all, I guessed and of course felt curious. Not only was it important, it was something he didn't want me to hear. I could only think it was the company calling. Perhaps he was taking the blame for my mistake and salary reduction was not the end of it. The moment that thought occurred to me, I couldn't stop my desire of wanting to find out if I was right.

I'll just listen in a little. If it has nothing to do with me, I'll return to the sofa immediately, I told myself as I tiptoed towards the door Shirai had gone out of. Shirai was in the middle of a conversation with his back turned fully away from the room. It didn't appear that he had noticed me moving outside.

“.....I see. The investigation revealed that the psychiatrist is certainly located in the area where Shimizu-kun lives, right?”

“.....”

Huh.....?

I was surprised to suddenly hear my name come up, but even more so, I was overwhelmed with shock when I heard the word 'psychiatrist'.

What did this mean?

Could this mean that Shirai had made someone investigate the Suzuki I had told him about before?

That's absurd, I thought, shaking. Shirai's voice rang in my ear.

“I hear that doctor called himself 'Suzuki' to Shimizu-kun.....Yes, it appears he used a hypnosis and had imprisoned him. Hmm? That doctor even has a villa in Karuizawa? It's a new property, you say?I see, that's the decision, is it?” Thank you, I heard Shirai say as I stood there absolutely dazed. “Then, could you fax me the results of the investigation immediately?” I came back to my senses at the sound of his words. “Thank you for your cooperation.”

Perhaps feeling that he was making me wait, Shirai hastily tried to end the phone call. Realizing this, I quickly returned back to my seat with feelings of confusion whirling inside my heart.

“Sorry. It was about work,” Shirai said and sat down beside me after opening the door and returning back inside the room.

He was about to grasp my hand again, but I told him, still in a daze, “.....Um.....You... you can take a shower before me.....”

“Huh!?” Shirai exclaimed, surprised because perhaps this was very sudden, but then peered hard into my face. “.....This is okay?”

Perhaps he was suspicious of me? But then I saw that I had nothing to worry

about. There was not the slightest color of suspicion in Shirai's eyes, even though he had asked in a hollow voice.

".....Yes....." I nodded; my voice was still terribly hoarse, but it seemed that Shirai hadn't noticed, because he was getting excited.

".....Thank you. So much," he said, overwhelmed with emotion and hugged me tightly.

".....!"

I knew I was trembling, but it wasn't because this felt disgusting. I was trembling with excitement at the strangest thing that I was about to do. Of course, Shirai couldn't read my mind, and it seemed that he thought that I was just nervous.

".....Think about it a little while I take a shower, okay?"

He removed his hands from my back and smiled at me. As if I didn't already feel guilty enough, now I felt worse by seeing him smile, but my desire to know surpassed that.

"Yes," I nodded as he gazed lovingly at me for a moment and then suddenly stood up, smiling. I watched him leave the room and waited it out a bit. When I was sure that Shirai was in the bathroom, I slowly stood up and tiptoed out of the living room.

Shirai had instructed for them to send the fax immediately.

Where on earth is the fax in this place? I thought, searching for it.

It probably wasn't in the living room. He wouldn't instruct them to send a fax if there was a chance I would see it. Then perhaps it was in his study or maybe in his bedroom? It was a large apartment; it seemed that there were four rooms.

If I search, I will find it soon, I thought, opening every door I saw.

The first room I barged into was his bedroom. No fax. The next door I opened led to his study, and there, I discovered the fax papers he had received. Inadvertently, I rushed over to it. I gazed at each page that was there.

"Ah!" I gasped out with surprise at seeing the documents that appeared to be several sheets of photographs. I quickly grabbed the papers and stared hard at them. Even though the photograph had come out grainy on paper, it was without a doubt Suzuki.

"I knew it....."

Shirai had been investigating Suzuki. At that moment, I was sure of it. I could guess the reason why he had done it, but I wasn't sure about the details.

Still....., I thought, gathering the stack of investigation results from the fax-receiving tray and began to read, wide-eyed, from the first page.

The name that was written on there apparently was Suzuki's real name. His current address was on there as well, and a picture.

Ahh.....I thought, almost crouching down on the spot, but kept my head up, thinking now was not the time. Clutching all of the documents in my hand, I rushed out of the room. I ran towards the entryway, put on my shoes, and flew out the door.

In the documents, 'Suzuki's' address was in Kobe.

I didn't think that he lived in the Kansai area, I thought, and ran down the street as I looked at the documents, trying to drill the address into my head.

I should go there after I get home and research on the Internet the route to take to get there, one part of me screamed this inside my head.

But I couldn't wait!

I raised my right hand up high to call one of the empty taxis in the lot.

"Excuse me. Please take me to this address."

I showed the address that was written on the document to the taxi driver. At the same time, I checked to make sure this car accepted credit cards.

Good, I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw that it did.

"Kobe? It's quite a cost, you know?"

The driver looked at me as if saying, you probably should take the train, but I disregarded his thoughtfulness. That's alright, I said.

I wanted to be taken right up to his place. If I went to Kobe by train, then from there, I would have to take a taxi to his place. This would be wasting time.

"You have my thanks then," the driver said, now in a good mood, and picked up speed.

"....."

Soon, I would get to see him; I would get to see 'Suzuki'! From just this thought alone, my heart beat uncontrollably fast, but I loved how calculating I was.

I now realized how much I desired to see him.

The taxi raced down the road through the night, carrying me straight to Kobe.

「Return: Chapter 9」

“Right here, Sir?”

The apartment complex the tax driver stopped in front of was definitely the one in the documents.

“Thank you.”

I paid with a credit card and got out of the car. Before me, stood what appeared to be a fully constructed, multistory apartment complex.

Was he really here?

I looked at the crumpled up documents I had previously studied, checking the room number again, and began walking towards the entrance. I stood for some time in front of the intercom, unable to dial the room number.

How much time had passed?

I knew nothing would be settled like this, but my fingers would not move. After much hesitation, I finally made up my mind and dialed the number of the room. Five seconds passed. Ten seconds passed.

The possibility that the person I was looking for was not at home completely hadn't even crossed my mind. Today was Saturday; he would not be home. I'll have to come again, I sighed, but at that moment, I heard the clicking sound of the intercom.

My heart pounded. When it became clear to my ears that he had answered, I heard a voice speak on the other side of the intercom.

“Come in.”

Tears came to my eyes the moment I heard that familiar voice.

“Finally.....” I can see you, I was about to say, but then heard the sound of the automatic door open.

“.....Ah.....”

The auto lock on the door had been lifted. It required me several seconds to realize this. I came to my senses when I saw that the door was closing again and rushed inside before the automatic door closed.

The door closed behind me. Now my destination was no other than his – ‘Suzuki’s’ – room. I knew I must go there, but my legs would not move forward. I was scared of our reunion. This is how I felt. But even more so, I was scared of finding out if Suzuki even remembered me.

“What did you come here for?”

I was scared he was going to say that.

“Who are you?”

I definitely would not be able to recover if he asked me that. Nevertheless, fear could not beat my desire to see him. I headed straight for the elevator and pressed the button that went up to the floor where his room was located as it was stated in the documents. As I rode up in the high-speed elevator, I began to feel dizzy, so I closed my eyes. In this virtual darkness, Suzuki’s face clearly appeared in my mind.

That beauty mark by the mouth. Those misty black eyes. Those red lips.

He certainly existed in this world.

His real name was completely unfamiliar to me, and he lived in a Kansai region completely unfamiliar to me.....why?

Why was he in Kansai?

Was it a coincidence? Or was it a necessity for him to be here?

I didn’t know. I couldn’t even provide a guess for it.

The moment I let out a big sigh, the elevator bell sounded, and the door opened.

“.....”

I will get out and head towards the room, I tried to imagine myself doing this, but couldn’t actually do it. I shouldn’t turn back now, should I? Hesitating for the last time, I pressed the button that read ‘open’ before the elevator door could close. But I had only hesitated for a moment. Surely, the more preferable choice was not to see him because then nothing would happen. But I could no longer suppress my desire to see him. I made up my mind, stepped out of the elevator, and began walking towards the room number that was written in the fax papers. Standing in front of the room, I looked up at the nameplate. Like on many of the other rooms, there wasn’t a name written on this nameplate.

Was ‘Suzuki’ really in this room?

“Come in.”

The voice on the other side of the intercom that had said this had certainly sounded like Suzuki’s. But because I hadn’t actually seen the person, I couldn’t be sure that it had been Suzuki. Whoever was on the other side had probably seen me through the camera on the intercom and had invited me in, so it was definitely Suzuki who was inside the room, because no one would invite a stranger inside their place just like that. Nevertheless, I couldn’t muster up the courage to ring the doorbell of this room and just stood in front of the door for a good minute.

Of course I couldn’t let this go on forever, so I finally reached out and pressed the doorbell. At that moment, the door opened outward, startling me, and I took several steps back.

“Hey.”

It seemed that he had been waiting in front of the door for the doorbell to ring. I was stunned. ‘He’ gave me a smile. Even though it had been a year since we had seen each other, he gave me a friendly smile as if we had only parted yesterday. I was in a daze.

‘He’ –Suzuki –, whom I had longed for and longed for and even saw in my dreams, spoke to me, smiling.

“I was waiting.....no, I wasn’t expecting you to come.....I guess.”

“.....Eh?”

I didn’t understand what that meant. But more than not understand what that meant, I couldn’t tell if I was awake or not right now. I could be convinced with this being a dream, yet I still could definitely be convinced with this not being a dream, but a delusion, also.

Suzuki was right in front of me.

This miracle – this joyful event – felt like a dream but then I wondered if this was really a good thing that it felt as so. When I carefully thought it over, it couldn’t be that I was asleep. Shirai had investigated him, and I had come to the address that was written in the investigation results, so there was absolutely nothing strange about him being right in front of me. This was definitely reality.

I bet he had given up in seeing me again. Nevertheless, it was such good luck to be reunited with him that for a moment it had been unbelievable to me, and I just stood there on the spot, gazing into his misty eyes.

“Well, come in.” He opened the door wider, ushering me inside.

“.....Pardon for intruding.....” The usual words you say when you enter someone’s home escaped my lips automatically, and this made me come back to my senses a little.

First the right foot, then the left. I stepped towards the open door, making my way inside the room. I entered inside and took off my shoes as Suzuki carefully watched every action I made. I couldn’t look up, because I sensed his piercing gaze.

“I’m happy to see you. What did you drink? Perhaps, you’re kind of drunk?”

I knew from the tone of his voice that Suzuki was smiling as he asked. Now that he had said that, I realized for the first time that I was severely drunk. Come to think of it, I had drunk more than one bottle of wine.

Was that why my thoughts were so scattered?

Perhaps I should have turned back, I thought, but then I was also sure that I definitely wouldn’t have been able to come to his place if I were immensely drunk. With

these two conflicting thoughts in my mind, I gathered up my courage and looked up straight into his – Suzuki's – face.

"....." What is it? Suzuki widened his large, dark eyes as if asking me this.

".....Ah....."

I felt like he could see deep into my heart. Inadvertently, I gazed into these charming eyes, but at that moment, a sentence from the investigation documents about Suzuki, which I had read over carefully in the taxi, popped into my mind.

His specialty is putting on hypnosis.

Was he putting hypnosis on me again?

He gradually narrowed his black eyes as I stared fixedly at him and then suddenly averted his gaze.

"Anyway, how are you? I was prepared, but I didn't know when, so now it's a bit of a mess."

".....Um....."

Not too long ago, he had sounded as if he had been expecting me to come. Had he predicted this? Or had he just said the first thing that had come to his head? I couldn't tell, but for some reason, as I followed after him, I thought it wasn't strange for him to predict things.

"Have a seat. I'll bring wine."

The place he led me to was a living/dining room. Out the window, I could see Kobe by night. The interior of the room was simple, resembling the villa at Karuizawa. But then I suddenly remembered that the villa had been beyond simple; it had only contained a bed. This made me laugh.

"What's so funny?" Well, have a seat, he said again, offering me the sofa. He then disappeared into the kitchen, but immediately returned, carrying two wine glasses.

"Red? White? Ah...I know. This is our long awaited reunion, so let's have some champagne."

"Um..." I interrupted Suzuki's question. What I wanted more than alcohol was proof that he really did exist before me right now.

".....I know. But I want you to spend just a little more time with me."

Before I could even say anything, Suzuki interrupted me as if he had read my mind and then disappeared into the kitchen again, leaving behind a charming smile. He quickly returned, carrying a champagne bottle and two champagne glasses.

"Well, let's drink." He sat down beside me and uncorked the champagne. Other than the sound of the pop, it was quiet. Then, Suzuki calmly poured champagne into the two glasses. "Here," he stretched out a glass towards me, and I inadvertently stared at his

fingertips. Slender fingers. Those fingers had taught me a pleasure I hadn't know before.
"Let's drink. Then we'll talk."

I came to my senses when Suzuki talked to me. When I turned my gaze towards his face, he was smiling at me.

"....."

I was almost drawn into his black eyes again, so I quickly looked away.

"Don't worry. I won't do anything."

From the lopsided smile Suzuki had given me, I realized that Suzuki probably fit the description in the written report. What was written in the report about him was true; there was no doubt about it. I was a little scared, but even though I was scared, I wasn't scared of Suzuki. Now that everything had become clear to me, the thing I was scared of was what would remain in my arms. I wanted to open my chest and show Suzuki everything that was storming around inside me. Since putting it into words is difficult, I thought as I continued to gaze at Suzuki, and then Suzuki smiled at me like he understood.

Here, he said, stretching out the glass.

I accepted it and lightly clinked my glass with his glass in the air.

Clink. A faint sound was heard inside the room, and I felt the glass in my hand vibrate. Even this slight sensation felt like an absolute reality to me.

"Cheers to our reunion," Suzuki said in his beautiful, deep, baritone voice and narrowed his beautiful black eyes.

".....I can...see you again....."

These words quietly spilled out of my mouth, and at the same time, something hot was welling up inside my chest.

"Yeah. I wanted to see you too," Suzuki also said quietly, put his glass to his lips and finished off his champagne in one gulp. "Drink," Suzuki told me, and I also put my glass to my lips.

".....Ughu.....!"

My throat was choked with tears, so I couldn't swallow the champagne.

"Why are you crying?" Suzuki stretched out his hand and stroked my hair. This gentle touch made me cry more and more.

"Ughu.....uughhu.....!"

"Don't cry. Listen to me." Drink first, Suzuki said, offering me the glass. It took some time for me to gulp down the champagne, little by little, as I choked back the sobs in my throat.

"That's good." Suzuki smiled and then made me put down my glass on the table

and poured champagne in it again. After he filled his own glass as well, Suzuki slowly began to speak. “I expected that you would find out my real name when I realized that a detective was investigating me. The person who requested this information about me was your devoted boss, right? If I remember correctly, his name is Shirai.”

“.....How do you.....”

Was I dreaming after all?

That’s all I could think. If this wasn’t a dream, Suzuki shouldn’t know anything. As I sat in a daze next to Suzuki, he suddenly laughed.

“Is it strange? You’ll be surprised when you hear my secret trick.”

“.....Secret trick?” I repeated after Suzuki as he laughed. I didn’t understand what he meant at all, but what he said next surprised me so much that I lost my voice.

“I’ve always been watching you.....I couldn’t give you up no matter what. I’ve always been beside you without you even noticing. That’s why I knew everything about you and what was happening around you. That’s all.”

“.....!” I can’t believe it, were the first words that popped into my head.

“You can’t believe it? Well, that would be true. I made sure you wouldn’t notice, after all.”

“.....Why.....?”

Suzuki had a terribly cheerful expression on his face. He shouldn’t be smiling when telling me something like this.

He had always been beside me making sure I wouldn’t notice him?

Really?

How?

How had he done this stalker-like thing?

And why had he done it?

Even though many questions filled my head, I couldn’t come up with a single answer for any of them. What on earth is happening? I thought, dazed, and Suzuki began to explain to me with a gentle tone of voice as if he were talking to a child.

“I fell in love with you. From the moment I first laid eyes on you. That’s why when I got the chance to hold you in my arms, I couldn’t help but do what I did and took you away with me to my villa in Karuizawa.”

“.....Karuizawa.....” I remembered it. You hypnotized me, right? I thought, and it seemed that Suzuki read my mind again.

“Thank you for remembering it. It was a blissful time for me. Probably the best in my life,” Suzuki said dreamily. He slowly stretched out his hand and touched my cheek. I jumped, but not because it felt disgusting. I was trembling with excitement at what was to

come. After he stroked me with his fingertips, Suzuki will bring his beautiful face close to mine and our lips will touch.

Our tongues will intertwine in a deep kiss. Surely this will happen.....

Before I knew it, I was looking forward to this so much that I had spaced out, and only when Suzuki spoke again, did I come back to my senses.

“I would ruin your life this way. I realized that it was impossible to keep you in my arms for an eternity. But we were in the same boat then. If I were prepared to destroy our lives like that, I could choose it to be for ‘eternity’. But even though I would be satisfied with that, I wasn’t sure you would be. I have no right to rob you of your future. That’s why I thought I had no choice but to let you go. But I couldn’t forget about you, so from that day on, I continued to secretly get close to you.”

“.....I.....” Completely hadn’t noticed that, I said, shaking my head no as Suzuki peered into my eyes, smiling.

“So you see, that’s why I was so surprised. When you came for a checkup to Chigasaki Hospital.” I thought it was fate, Suzuki said, a wry smile playing on his lips and then resumed speaking. “I was already prepared to never see you again and then suddenly, I saw you at the hospital. I’m an atheist, but at that moment, I believed in God. I thought a miracle had truly happened! When I looked at the medical chart the nurse brought me, my body shook, and I couldn’t hold back my desire to want to touch you again.” Here, Suzuki stopped talking and let out a small sigh filled with emotion. He was smiling, looking like he was savoring his happiness, and it made my chest feel hot as I wondered if I had made him feel this happy.

I’m happy too.

I tried to let him know this, but it seemed that he already knew, because he gave me a nod, smiling and continued talking.

“So I hypnotized you again. Thanks to that, you told me the words I longed to hear – ‘I wanted to see you’. But I fell into a dilemma. I couldn’t tell if you had spoken from your heart or if the hypnosis I had put on you had made you say that. Nevertheless, the joy I felt from being able to touch you and hold you again made me feel like I had gone to heaven. I could spend the rest of my life in happiness from just that one night experience, that’s what I thought. Even if it was probably just the effect of the hypnosis I had put on you, you had told me that you desired to see me. And I was satisfied with that.....or so I thought.....but people become greedy, don’t they? They get one thing and then want another. I had gotten my lifetime of happiness. That’s why I had already made up my mind to give you up, but before I knew it, I followed you and moved here to Kansai.” Suzuki scorned himself and averted his eyes from me. He stretched out his hand

and grabbed the bottle. Then he poured champagne into our glasses that had become empty without us even realizing it.

“.....It’s funny. Even though I wished to see you.....I feel as if I’m in a dream right now. I’m so happy it’s frightening.” Concentrating on his glass, Suzuki said this dreamily as if talking to himself, and had a far away look in his eyes.

“This isn’t a dream. I’m right here.” I inadvertently blurted out, because it hurt that he wasn’t looking at me even though I was sitting right beside him.

“Mhmm. You are. But why? Why did you come here? I thought Shirai, or if not him, then the police would come. I had kidnapped you and imprisoned you. I was prepared to be arrested for this crime I had done, but why are you the one to visit me? ...Is this a dream after all?”

“I said this isn’t a dream. Why do you think this is a dream?” I was the one to peer into his eyes and firmly tell him this, because he had somewhat of a dazed look on his face when he had spoken.

“Because it’s unbelievable, isn’t it?” He was still in a daze. My face reflected in his black, beautiful eyes rimmed with long eyelashes.

“I wanted to see you. I even said this at Chigasaki Hospital, didn’t I? And it wasn’t because I was hypnotized. I had wished for this for a long time. That’s why I came here today. Because more than wanting to know your real name and address, I wanted to see you.”

“.....”

I pleaded, and he widened his eyes. They were terribly misty. My face looked distorted as it reflected in his eyes. I didn’t realize that this wasn’t only because his eyes were misty but also because my own eyes were welling up with tears, and I continued to gaze at my own reflection in his eyes until he spoke.

「Return: Chapter 10」

“I can’t believe it.....Seriously?” As he began to speak again, a single tear fell from the corner of his black, beautiful eye and trickled down his cheek. I didn’t know how much time had passed.

“I wanted to see you.....Why hadn’t I confirmed your real name and contact address from the nurse at Chigasaki Hospital? I regretted not doing this for a long time. I thought I’d be satisfied just knowing that you existed in this world. But I couldn’t hold back my feelings of wanting to see you. I just had a dream about you recently. You held me in my dream. And now you’re still here even when I’m awake. I didn’t think such happiness could exist. When I woke up from my dream, I was seized by despair and couldn’t fall back to sleep. I want to see you... I want to see you. Was the only thought going through my head. Till dawn, I spent the rest of the night wishing only to see you.”

“.....I knew it. This is only a dream,” Suzuki gave a crooked smile and set his empty glass down on the table.

“Why.....?”

This is real though, I thought, feeling sad and clinging to his arm. Then he placed his hand on top of my hand and smiled kindly at me.

“You’re not being hypnotized right now, so why do you say only the words I wish to hear?”

“This is....this isn’t a dream.....!”

Unable to stand it anymore, I set my glass down on the table and embraced Suzuki.

“.....I knew it. This is a dream,” Suzuki chuckled and hugged me back. His voice in my ear brought tears to my eyes.

“This isn’t a dream.”

Why didn’t he believe me? I felt like I was going to cry now, but his powerful embrace stopped my tears.

“This isn’t a dream,” I repeated.

“Mhm. This isn’t a dream,” Suzuki agreed with me and hugged me tighter.

Aah...I can be in his arms again. Tears filled my eyes different from just a while ago. There was a mountain of things I wanted to tell him, but right now, rather than exchanging words, I wanted our bodies to touch. I prayed for that and hugged him tighter.

“.....Alright.”

It seemed my feelings had reached him perfectly, because our hearts were facing

each other, and the moment he whispered into my ear, he pushed me down on the sofa.

“.....Is it cramped.....?” Suzuki said as he came down on top of me and covered my lips with his own.

“Mm.....”

Desire quickly arose in me, the moment I felt the soft sensation of his lips.

This wasn't his dream form. This was the actual him. A cry almost escaped my lips as he kissed me. Suzuki kissed me more deeply as if taking in that cry. His tongue broke through my two rows of teeth and licked inside my mouth. He immediately located my tongue and firmly coiled his own around it. I jumped when he started tightly sucking on it and opened my eyes just a crack to see Suzuki narrow his eyes in a smile and slowly lower his hand. He began to undress me while we kissed, but because I was feeling impatient, I suddenly started acting on my own. I stretched out my hands and began to unbutton Suzuki's shirt.

“.....”

Suzuki widened his eyes in surprise.

“.....Ah.....”

I wanted him more than I wanted to confirm with my own hands that he actually existed.

This warmth. This feel of his smooth, bare skin. This beautiful feel of his skin as it glistened with sweat from the light in the room. I had missed all of this. I loved all of this. His hand will slide over my skin with gentle caresses, sometimes rough. I felt like I was going to come just by imagining this. I was becoming too aggressive, because I was drunk with euphoria. When I tried to pull back my hands, because I suddenly felt shy, Suzuki grasped my hands.

“.....I want to undress you, but we're pressed for time, so let's undress together,” he said, interrupting our kiss, and my desire grew more and more from these words, so I just nodded, unable to say anything. We got up and began to undress. I tried to unbutton my shirt, desperately trying to control my shaking fingers, but I couldn't quite do it.

“I'll help you with that.”

Already done taking off his clothes, Suzuki chuckled as he stretched out his hands towards me. He stripped my clothes off of me fast, as if by magic. Then he pushed me down on the sofa again; this time I was naked. He buried his face in my neck and started to firmly suck on my skin. It hurt, because it felt like he was biting me, but pleasure dominated the pain. Suzuki's hand crawled over my chest and began to pluck at my nipple.

“Ah.....!”

A gasp escaped my lips, and my skin began to feel hot. My heart was already beating so fast it echoed in my head like a ringing in my ears.

“No.....! Ah.....!”

Suzuki ferociously tormented my nipple as he brought his face down from my neck to my chest and took my other nipple into his mouth. After making it erect by licking it with his tongue, he lightly bit on it. I was in absolute excitement from his persistent touches and couldn't help to loudly cry out. Finally, Suzuki brought his lips down from my chest to my stomach. He took hold of my legs and lifted me up, raising my hips in the air. Then he grabbed the fleshy parts surrounding my anus and spread it wide open. The moment I felt an empty cool feeling down there, Suzuki buried his face in.

“No!It's dirty.....!”

He inserted his tongue inside my anus as he held it open with his fingers. He licked the top of my soft insides making me twist my hips with enthusiasm.

“Ah.....!”

Before long, one of his fingers went inside along with his tongue.

“Ngh.....!”

It began to feel out of place, because it had been a while since his finger had dug deep inside me.

I groaned lightly, my legs open in an awkward position, like a frog being dissected. Suzuki raised his face from between my legs to talk.

“You didn't let anyone touch you here, did you? I'm happy.”

“Cause.....!”

There's no one that I will let touch me. There's no one besides you who I want to let touch me and who I think can touch me.

I wanted to let him know that, but he began wiggling his finger inside me, so my voice was lost among my gasps.

“Ah!No.....!Ah.....!”

One finger became two fingers until finally, a third finger went inside. His three fingers touched what seemed to be my prostate gland, making me feel a strong urge of excitement I couldn't control, and in turn, I couldn't help but cry out like an animal.

“I want it.....!Aah.....! Hurry.....!Hurry, I want it.....!”

I wanted his thick cock to fill the throbbing inside of me.

Before I knew it, I was thrusting out my hips, begging for him to put it in. Suddenly, I felt a small breeze down there.



Startled, I opened my eyes that I hadn't even known were closed.

“.....Ah.....”

At that moment, Suzuki fixed his grip on my legs and pressed his erect cock on my anus. My body shook with pleasure, and I let out a cry full of emotion. Suzuki narrowed his eyes, smiling happily at my reaction and thrust his hips further inside.

“Aah!” I let out a loud cry, because the feel of it was incomparable to a finger. It felt out of place, but pleasure exceeded that, because I had finally gotten the thing I had been tired of waiting for.

“You're tight...” Suzuki muttered as he continued to move his hips further inside until his legs connected with mine.

“Aah.....”

Suzuki's cock pierced in so deep that it felt like my intestines rose. Just from that, I couldn't help but feel happy.

“I'm going to move,” Suzuki announced and then began to slowly move in rhythm. His motions gradually grew faster, intensifying. Before I knew it, I was reaching orgasm.

“Ahh.....! Ah!Ah!Aahh!”

The place our bodies connected, my skin, and even my breath felt so hot that it burned, and I couldn't help but want to release that heat. It became so hot that even my brain seemed to boil, and by now, my ability to think had become zero.

I want to come.

But it will be a waste to come now.

I've always wanted to experience an orgasm together with him.

As I struggled with these conflicting thoughts, he was the one who released me. He let go of one of my legs, grasped my dripping, erect cock and drew it through his hand once.

“AAH.....!” I immediately came, unable to resist this direct stimulus, leaving milky white fluid in his hand.

“.....Kuh.....”

Immediately after that, he positioned himself like he was looming over me. I felt something drip inside of me, and I knew that he had also come. With this, my chest welled up with passionate feelings.

I had been reunited with him.

He actually existed, as I had thought.

And he wants me as well.

This is like a dream.

I was scared that if I closed my eyes this would really become a ‘dream’, so I dared to keep my eyes open and look up at ‘him’ – at Suzuki.

“I like you.....I love you,” he said in a whisper and slowly brought his beautiful face close to mine.

“.....I also.....”

I wasn’t sure if I could answer. The lump forming in my throat had robbed me of my voice, so I just accepted Suzuki’s lips as they came down on my own, and for a moment, got drunk on the kiss with him for he let me feel ultimate happiness.

* * * *

“Are you alright?”

It seemed that I had fainted after coming twice in a row. I opened my eyes when I felt him patting my cheek and saw a plastic bottle of mineral water being held out before me.

“Do you want to drink?”

“.....Mhm.....”

I hadn’t even noticed when he had moved me to the bed. It was a small, twin size-bed. When I looked around the room, I saw that it wasn’t large, and the simple, furniture-less interior reminded me of the room in Karuizawa where I had been imprisoned. As Suzuki helped me sit up and supported my back, I drank the water out of the plastic bottle. I drank the entire thing almost in one go and let out a great sigh.

“Do you want to drink some more?” he asked. I shook my head no, so Suzuki took the empty plastic bottle out of my hand and showed me a smile.

“Should we talk a little?”

“.....Mhm.”

Talking.....the outcome of our conversation would probably cause us a burden. If we were to separate right now, we would be apart again without knowing if this had been a dream or reality. I felt that perhaps to me, and to him, this was the best path to take. We would continue living with this memory while treasuring each other in our hearts. The feeling that we could never meet will make our hearts grow fonder eternally, and our love would never disappear from our hearts.

That would be an ideal love from one standpoint. Actually, in the past, I had wanted to choose this path. However, there is no way a beautiful, dream-like memory could surpass the reality. This was my realization.

No matter what I heard now and no matter what regrets I might have, hearing

what he had to say should be much better than living with the thought of never seeing him again. I gazed back at Suzuki with this thought in my heart. I knew Suzuki felt my decision. He nodded at me and began to speak slowly as if he were carefully choosing his words.

“.....I fell in love with you many years ago. You frequented a bar called ‘S’ in Kichijoji. I also used to go there. I gazed at you from the end of the counter.”

“.....Huh.....?”

Although I had made up my mind to accept anything, I was still confused to hear this unexpected thing and inadvertently exclaimed a little. I certainly had frequented that bar in Kichijoji. One night, I had been severely drunk and entered that bar on accident. There were practically no people in there, so I came to like the quiet atmosphere, and from then on, I often began to go there. It seemed that because the inside of the bar was so dim, you couldn’t see the customer’s faces very well. In the corner, at the counter way back in the store, I remembered that a young man certainly had sat there.

No, *did* I remember?

Usually, I had been over drinking and had been short on sleep when I stopped by that bar, so I didn’t remember much of what happened there. I looked back at him in a daze, thinking, don’t tell me we met at that bar! Then, Suzuki gave me a somewhat complicated smile.

“You don’t remember, as I had thought. But that’s natural, since we’ve never talked. I only boldly gazed at you. But somewhere in my heart, I was hoping that my gaze had reached you, and you had noticed me. I believed that’s exactly why you had always come to that bar.....”

I couldn’t say a word to Suzuki as he hanged his head. I feared that I would hurt him further if I apologized. When I also lowered my head, I sensed that Suzuki looked up, and so with that, I also looked up and saw that he was looking straight back at me as he spoke.

“My chance came when I saw you having an anemic attack at the train station. I felt sorry for you, but even though you were feeling sick, I was excited at this opportunity to talk to you. Yet you treated me as if I were a complete stranger. Even though in my mind, I knew this was natural, my feelings did not catch up with this. When I was forced to realize that you had been completely ignoring me the whole time we had sat at that bar, my mind went blank. So.....”

“.....You.....hypnotized me?” I asked, already knowing the answer, but this time it was *my* mind that had gone blank.

“Yes.” Again, Suzuki gave a somewhat complicated smile and nodded. “I did it

completely out of selfish resentment. Of course I realized this, and yet, I couldn't hold back my urge to do it. I cursed you for not having even a fragment of a memory of me! It was your punishment...that's what I told myself. It was a terrible thing to think.....No, the word 'terrible' wouldn't even cut it."

"....."

A wry smile that had suddenly appeared on Suzuki's lips vanished just as suddenly putting a serious look on his face.

"You can call the police. I will, of course, give myself up to the police."

"Police....."

Of course I didn't wish to call the police or even have the thought itself. So I was dazed. When I said the word 'police', Suzuki nodded.

"I was prepared for my arrest when I found out that your boss began to investigate me. At first, I thought about disappearing off to Germany. I already had a place to work over there. And yet, I found it hard to leave your side, so I kept postponing my voyage. But I really hadn't expected for you to come here to see me tonight, because I thought either your boss, who had made that request to the investigation firm, or the police, who your boss had probably reported me to, would come here." Suzuki fixed his gaze at me and had a look like he wanted to say something.

".....What?"

Even though he had been speaking so smoothly, why was he faltering now?

My own voice sounded terribly far away when I asked.

".....I've revealed everything to you. Now that you've heard it, tell me....."

".....?" I peered into Suzuki's face as he fell silent again.

".....I wonder...if you don't feel disgusted....." He had his head down as he said these words in a voice so small that it was barely audible.

"Disgusted....." I repeated after him, once again, completely not holding such feelings in my heart. Then Suzuki said in a voice just scarcely stronger than a whisper.

"I'm scared that you'll hate me."

"I don't hate you."

I felt as if the fog inside my head had cleared up all at once. My voice sounded loud within the room when I firmly said this.

".....You....."

It seemed that my loud voice had even surprised Suzuki, and he let out a suppressed sigh after widening his eyes.

"This is like a dream. Really....." Suzuki said dreamily, his beautiful eyes growing misty, and I couldn't look away from the twinkling light in his eyes. "Even

when I revealed everything to you, I managed not to lose you. I didn't think it would be possible for this to happen in real life."

"Why not.....?"

I felt the light in Suzuki's eyes gradually grow stronger.

"I will never let you go again."

Before I knew it, he reached out and grabbed my arm, pulling me close to him. His eyes disappeared from my view as he pressed me to his chest.

"I will never let you go again....."

I heard his beautiful, baritone voice whisper dreamily into my ear. A light, musky scent began to rise. I closed my eyes, inhaling that scent of the cologne he was wearing. The scene of the dimly lit bar crossed my mind.

The counter where I had always sat.

The reticent bartender appeared before my eyes.

And.....sitting on a stool in the depths of the bar, a young man.

That man had a beauty mark by the mouth.

".....Ah....." I exclaimed. I remembered, I thought, trying to pull away from him. I tried to tell Suzuki that I had remembered, but the very next moment, doubt arose in me, so I buried my face in his shirt again.

"I love you.....No matter what happens, I won't let you go again," Suzuki whispered this again in my ear and hugged me tightly. Maybe he had read my thoughts. For an instant, fear crossed my mind, but I didn't think to leave his arms. Perhaps the scene I had just imagined had been a memory forged by Suzuki. He said that he had revealed everything, but perhaps there was a chance that everything was actually his creation.

The result of the investigation had, without a doubt, shown that Suzuki is a doctor and revealed his real name. It was certain that he existed, but it was still unknown whether my relationship with him was real or made up.

Nevertheless.....

"I don't want us to be apart....."

Even if everything was his – the man who called himself 'Suzuki' – creation, I didn't mind.

Because I will continue to long for him, I thought, a smile spreading on my face as I hugged him tightly.

"I love you," Suzuki said dreamily in his beautiful voice. His intoxicating voice rang in my ear, and he bit my earlobe.

".....Ah.....!"

I jumped, even though I thought I had already reached my limit.

“You still want it?” He chuckled, embarrassing me. Nevertheless, I relaxed my arms around him and willingly accepted Suzuki’s lips as they came down on my own in a kiss. The simple kiss finally changed into a violent kiss when we started sucking each other’s tongues.

“Ngh.....!Mmm.....!” I gasped, unable to control myself as he coiled his tongue around mine so much that it hurt. Suzuki slowly pushed me down on the bed again.

“.....I can’t.....!”

He began to rub my nipples that were already crimson in color from being licked and touched so much. A jolt of excitement ran up my back, and I inadvertently twisted my hips, but I had no more power left in me to hold him. Even my voice was becoming hoarse when I gasped in-between our kiss.

I couldn’t do this anymore, I shook my head, but Suzuki didn’t listen.

“Didn’t I say I won’t let you go again?” He said with a smile after pressing his lips to mine with a kiss and then brought his face to my chest.

“No.....!Ah.....!”

He began sucking on my nipple, and at the same time began firmly pinching my other nipple. I arched my back backwards from the intense sensation that came from both my nipples.

Twitch.

I felt my limp cock slightly pulsate.

“See.....?” It’s okay, isn’t it? Laughing, Suzuki looked up from my chest looking like he wanted to say this and then looked down again and bit my nipple.

“Aah!”

He crushed it with his teeth, and my cock pulsated again. Suzuki was quick to notice when it began to take form. At the same time he shot me a glance and a smile, he got up to bury his face in my lower region.

“Noo.....!”

He took my cock into his mouth as he firmly held my legs. The moment I felt the hot inside of his mouth, I felt myself become excited. Suzuki coiled his tongue around the tip of my cock and stuck the tip of his tongue into my urethra.

“AH!Aah.....!”

My cock trembled and instantly grew hard. At the same time, my anus began twitching violently in expectation of Suzuki’s thrusts. I almost closed my legs to control myself from twisting my hips, but Suzuki prevented me from doing that and reached

behind me as he continued devouring my frontal region. He inserted his finger and began to violently twist it inside of me.

“No.....!Ah! Aah.....!”

The place his cock had been in just a while ago rejoiced at his finger and twitched even more.

“*Do you want it?*” Suzuki looked up and smiled as he continued blowing me. I shook my head yes, losing all sense of myself.

“*Alright.*”

Suzuki narrowed his eyes in a smile again as he continued blowing me and groping around behind me with his finger. He was still not giving me the thing I ‘wanted’.

“No.....!Ah!Aah.....!”

I expected to have already reached my limit, but my cock was completely hard again, and I felt like I was going to come any second.

“I can’t.....!Aah.....!I can’t.....!”

Hurry, I want it.

Still losing all sense of myself, I stretched out my hand and grabbed Suzuki’s hair.

“.....”

Perhaps it hurt him, because Suzuki raised his head and looked at me.

“Hurry.....!” I cried out, unable to stand it anymore, and Suzuki looked up at me, narrowed his eyes in a smile and then finally released me from his mouth and rose himself up.

“.....!”

My erect cock felt a little cold, being exposed to the air. Pre-cum came out from the tip and trickled down my penis.

Hurry.

I pleaded that I was tired of waiting and looked up at Suzuki with expectation.

“I know.” Suzuki suddenly laughed and then lowered the fastener of his slacks and took out his erect cock.

“.....Aah.....”

Inadvertently, a sigh of admiration escaped my lips. Suzuki chuckled at this, and now of all times, I began feeling embarrassed thinking that perhaps I was getting greedy.

“No.....!” I looked away, burying my face into the sheets.

“You mean yes, don’t you?” Suzuki chuckled again and then grabbed my legs again. The moment he pressed the hot mass on my anus, my mind went blank.

“Come.....!”

I want it.

I spread out my arms and legs, trying to welcome Suzuki.

“Didn’t I say I won’t let you go again?”

My heart echoed inside my head like a ringing in my ears. I heard Suzuki’s sweet, dreamy voice over that noise.

I won’t let you go. A chill ran up my spine, but right at that moment, the tip of Suzuki’s cock entered inside me.

“Aah!”

My soft insides contracted violently and called him in deeper and deeper. Before I could wrap my legs and arms around Suzuki, he began to quickly move. After he had plunged it in, he quickly began to violently fuck me.

“Ah!Aah!AH! AH! AAH!”

I felt myself heading towards an orgasm from the powerful rhythm of his thrusts. I didn’t have the energy to even gasp anymore. Just a while ago, reaching orgasm again had seemed unreal to me, but my body was in a fever, and I felt blood powerfully begin moving through my veins.

“I can’t!Aah.....!I can’t.....!I can’t.....!”

The rhythmic thrusts went on and on. Breathing began to hurt, since I kept gasping each time his cock pierced deep inside me, yet I was unable to feel it go in and out, because I lost all feeling in my anus. I knew I was in the final moment between pleasure and pain. Even though I desired to be connected to him forever, it was hard to throw away my wish to come and get relief, so I was confused about what I wanted to do.

Meanwhile, Suzuki continued his rhythm and kept trying to make me head towards climax.

“I can’t.....!Aah.....!I can’t.....!I can’t.....!”

Please, I begged, my voice sounding far away as I remembered the day he had first held me. At first it had felt like rape. It had hurt so much that I lost consciousness. But it didn’t take long before being held by him began to give me pleasure.

Please, already! Those words I had said many times when I had done it with him, but I felt like the innumerable amount of times I had said those words had been because I wanted him to stop, because it hurt.

But the ‘please’ of right now did not in the slightest mean that I wanted to be released from pain. I wanted us to come together. That was my only wish. I thought this as I opened my eyes that I didn’t even know were closed and looked up at Suzuki.

“I won’t let you go.....”

I wasn’t sure I heard Suzuki say this, but I was sure his lips had mouthed that. It

felt like that to me.

Being caught in his arms and exhausting our desire.

What a charming future that would be! I thought and nodded, smiling.

Let's go there together! I screamed inside my mind.

Could he hear me?

Suzuki was smiling, looking not at all out of breath. Then, as he continued moving his hips, he let go off one of my legs, grasped my cock and drew it through his hand once.

“AAH!”

It was as if he had squeezed out the semen and a little bit of milky white fluid flew out the tip.

“.....!”

After Suzuki gulped, he slowly came down on top of me.

“.....I won't let you go. Never again. Yes, for all eternity.....”

Because the light on the ceiling was behind him, I couldn't see his facial expression at all right now. But surely his eyes were twinkling, and I imagined that he had a smile on his beautiful, fair face that showed his happiness. Gasping from being out of breath, I hugged him tightly, pulling him close to me.

“I love you.....” Suzuki whispered the words I desired and pressed his hot lips to my cheek in a kiss.

Me too.

I love you, I thought, hugging him, but a thought crossed my mind.

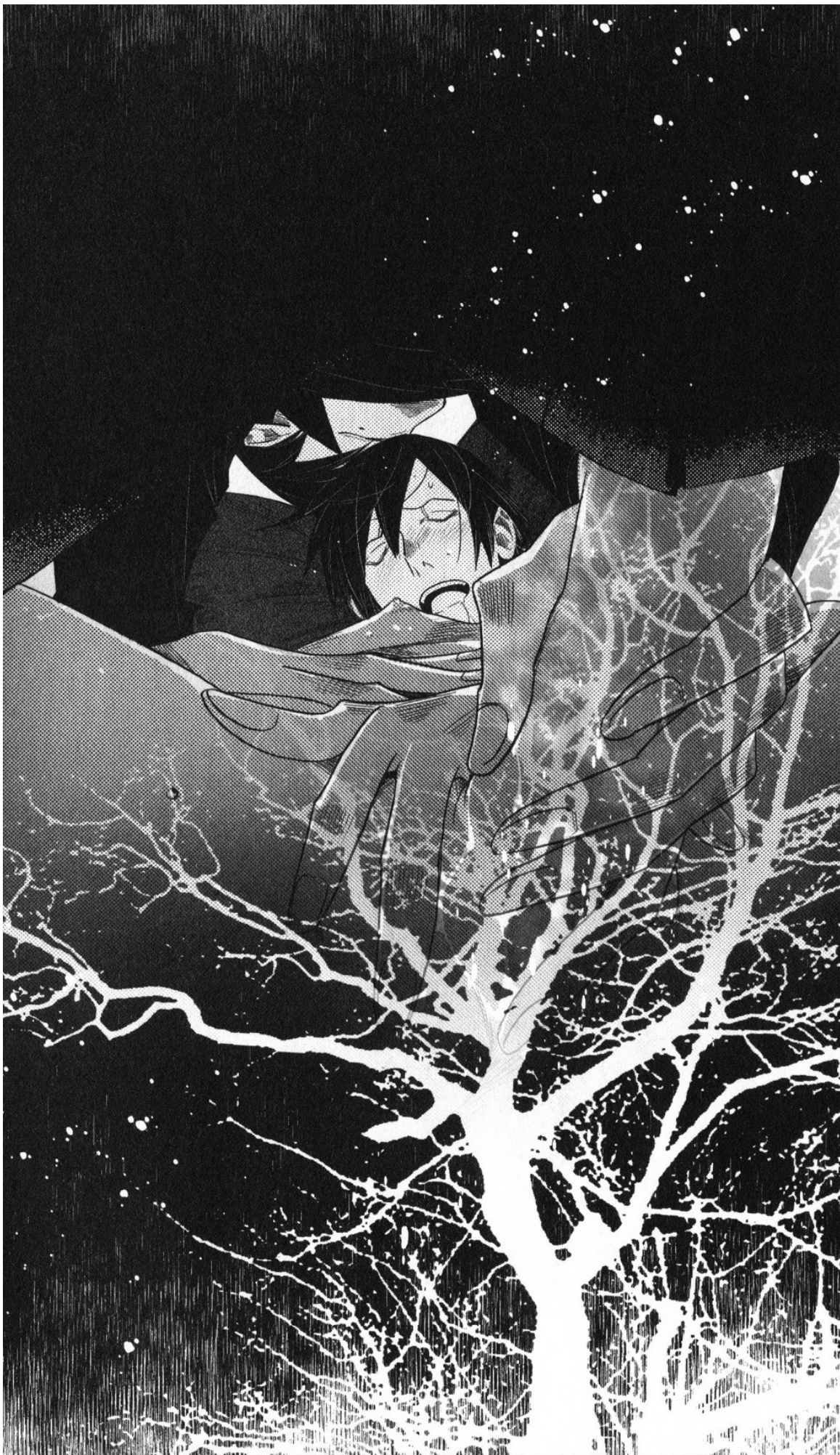
How could I be okay with this when I still had doubts?

The feelings I held towards Suzuki....were they really my own?

Perhaps even these feelings had been created by him.

The voice inside my head warned me. And at that moment, Shirai's face suddenly appeared in my mind.

He had showed me sympathy and had been concerned about me over many things. I knew perfectly well that returning his feelings would have been the right path for a person to take, because by choosing that path, the future would clearly be filled with happiness, since he always did so much for me. Nevertheless, the one I chose had not been Shirai, but this man.



As I hugged him ever so tightly, he – the man who called himself Suzuki – whispered words of love into my ear as he bit my earlobe.

“.....I love you. I’ll never ever let you go.”

The words ‘I’ll never ever let you go’ that he kept saying were so beautiful and yet so dangerous. His voice that contained laughter also brought on a sense of danger. But I was already prepared to dive into that danger.

“I love you. We won’t be apart anymore. Absolutely never.”

I probably had no choice but to quit my job. First, I had to ask Shirai not to disclose the results of the investigation. But would I really ever see Shirai again? Wasn’t I already imprisoned in Suzuki’s arms?

“.....I love you.....”

Occasionally, waves of danger swept over me.

But this was the heart I had chosen, I thought. Suzuki’s heart.

Or rather, ‘his’ heart, for he didn’t want to be called by his real name for some reason. I brought my face close to his chest and returned his embrace with all my might.

* * * *

After that, I ended up quitting my job at the office. Though I wanted to see the completed project I had worked so hard on, and I did feel guilty about what had happened with Shirai, since he always had done so much for me, I couldn’t hold back my own desires. Shirai had tried to convince me not to resign, but my own intention, the intention I wanted to fulfill – to quit my job and be by ‘his’ side – came first. Now, in just a few more hours, I would be leaving Japan. I had made up my mind to depart with him to Germany where he already had a place to work.

Maybe I would regret it, but I think I could be prepared for that, because I was now reunited with him – he who had been prepared to give up on me, thinking that he had no other choice. But from experience, I learned that absence makes the heart grow fonder.

We’d never be apart anymore, because I didn’t want us to be apart.

What was really waiting for me in the future?

I didn’t know, but at the very least, I definitely knew that there was nothing else I would regret more than losing ‘him’.

And this was real to me.

Believing that, I ran behind him as we headed towards the departure gates, and inside his beautiful, kindly smiling, black eyes I saw my own image – my own face that I

could clearly tell was showing the ultimate happiness. Feeling true satisfaction, I returned his smile.



小説b-Boy2009年7月号「純愛」扉イラスト